FIRST THINGS

Freedom and Decency

David B. Hart

What It's Like To Be a Christian Peter Simpson

Conciliating Hatred Steven D. Smith

Fear of Redemption R. R. Reno

Kenneth L. Woodward *on responses to* The Passion

Paul Marshall *on religious terrorism in India*

Robert T. Miller *on* Locke v. Davey

BOOKS : *Edward T. Oakes* • *George McKenna*
William D. Rubinstein • *J. A. Gray*

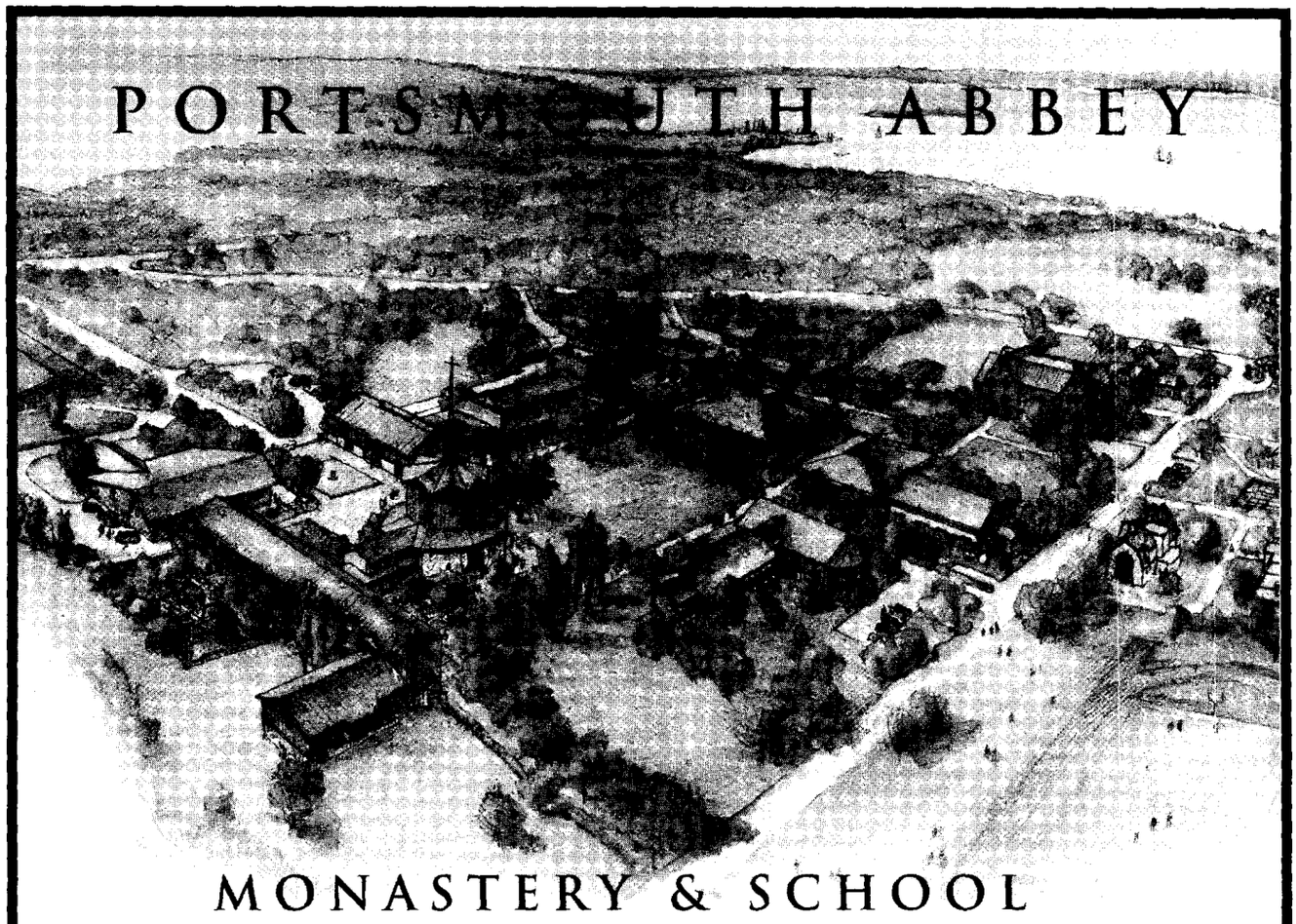
THE PUBLIC SQUARE

Richard John Neuhaus

IN THIS ISSUE: *The Catholic Reform II*

June / July 2004 • Number 144 • $4.25/$5.25 Canada

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



MONASTERY & SCHOOL

Where are you now? Where are you going? How will you get there? The monks of Portsmouth Abbey have found answers to these questions in the Rule of St. Benedict... Could this be the answer for you?

We invite you to experience a period of prayer, work, rest and recreation in our Monastic Life Experience Program for single, college-educated, Catholic men, 21–45 years old, who wish to spend time considering a call to monastic life. The program is "open-ended", meaning you may spend a few days, a week or more at the abbey. There will be ample time for exercise and rest at our beautiful 550-acres on Narragansett Bay.

Familiarize yourself with monastic life! And consider the possibility that *This Call May Be For You.*

See also www.portsmouthabbey.org for our 10-week Internship Program.

Contact: Dom Ambrose Wolverton, O.S.B.
email: fatherambrose@portsmouthabbey.org

Portsmouth Abbey School in Rhode Island is the nation's leading coeducational Catholic Benedictine boarding school for students in grades 9 through 12. We strive for balance in education, spirituality, athletics and the arts – and that balance is at the heart of the way we live and learn. Our intellectually challenging academic offerings; our 1,500-year-old Benedictine tradition; our spectacular location on Narragansett Bay and our friendly, safe environment where lifelong friendships are nurtured – these are all reasons to find out more about Portsmouth Abbey School.

For more information: Contact Geri Zilian, Director of Admissions at 401. 683. 2005 or admissions@portsmouthabbey.org

285 CORY'S LANE PORTSMOUTH RHODE ISLAND 02871 401.683.2000
www.portsmouthabbey.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FIRST THINGS

JUNE/JULY 2004 • Number 144

Correspondence

2 Agony and art; treading out clichés; godless juries; "Pharisees"; constitutional reminders; the virtues of penance

Opinion

Robert T. Miller 8 Religion Uniquely Disfavored
Paul Marshall 10 Hinduism and Terror
Kenneth L. Woodward 13 *The Passion*'s Passionate Despisers

Articles

Steven D. Smith 17 Conciliating Hatred
Peter Simpson 23 What It's Like To Be a Christian
R. R. Reno 29 Fear of Redemption
David B. Hart 35 Freedom and Decency

Books

Edward T. Oakes 44 The Age of Shakespeare by Frank Kermode; Shakespeare by Michael Wood; The Trial of Man by Craig Bernthal
George McKenna 49 Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation by Allen C. Guelzo
William D. Rubinstein 52 The Origins of the Final Solution by Christopher R. Browning
J. A. Gray 56 Jesus in America by Richard Wightman Fox
60 Briefly Noted

The Public Square

Richard John Neuhaus 64 The Catholic Reform II, *etc.*

Poetry

Bill Daugherty (7, 43) *Sean O'Neill* (42)

First Things (ISSN #1047-5141) is published monthly (except for combined issues June/July and August/September) for $34 per year ($14.97 for students) by the Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing office. POSTMASTER: send address changes to First Things, P.O. Box 401, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. **Editorial Offices:** The Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. **Editorial Phone:** (212) 627-1985. **Email:** ft@firstthings.com. **Website:** http://www.firstthings.com. **Advertising Offices:** 129 Phelps Avenue, Suite 312, Rockford, IL 61108. **Advertising Phone:** (815) 398-8569. **Email:** firstthingsadsales@pma-inc.net. **Subscription Department:** P.O. Box 401, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. **Subscription Phone:** 1-877-905-9920. **Email:** frth@kable.com. Unsolicited material cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient return postage. Newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., One Media Way, 12406 Rt. 250, Milan, OH 44846. Copyright © 2004 by the Institute on Religion and Public Life. All rights reserved. Produced in the USA.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FIRST THINGS

FIRST THINGS is published by Religion and Public Life, an interreligious, nonpartisan research and education institute whose purpose is to advance a religiously informed public philosophy for the ordering of society.

Editor-in-Chief: *Richard John Neuhaus*
Editor: *Damon Linker*
Associate Editor: *J. A. Gray*
Managing Editor: *Matthew Boudway*
Editorial Assistant: *Vincent Druding*
Poetry Editor: *Joseph Bottum*
Publisher: *Institute on Religion and Public Life*
Publishing Service: *Publishing Management Associates*

EDITORIAL BOARD

Midge Decter
Timothy George
Mary Ann Glendon
Wilfred M. McClay
David Novak
Michael Novak
George Weigel

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Hadley Arkes
Stephen M. Barr
James Burtchaell
David Dalin
Thomas Derr
Jean Bethke Elshtain
Elizabeth Fox-Genovese
Suzanne Garment
Robert George
Russell Hittinger
Leonid Kishkovsky
Glenn Loury
George Marsden
Robert Louis Wilken

CORRESPONDENCE

Agony and Art

The rhetorical devices employed by Russell Hittinger and Eilzabeth Lev in "Gibson's *Passion*" (March) to justify the orgy of sadomasochism and anti-Semitism in Mel Gibson's film—and to cover over their own lack of cogent arguments—should not go unchallenged. They note, for example, that the film is "nearly the opposite" of a passion play because viewers "must struggle to keep watching, which is humiliating in its own right." This is precisely what makes the film so dangerous: it leaves the audience so humiliated that it will look for someone to blame. This is how people react to being humiliated. Just as Hitler used German humiliation during the Weimar Republic to galvanize anti-Semitism, Gibson's message is: don't blame the Romans or Pilate for what happened to Jesus—blame the Jews.

Michael Rose
Chevy Chase, Maryland

Not one of us escapes the struggle between the better and lesser angels of our nature, not even the Sanhedrin. A film that better portrayed the trial of Jesus, somewhat downplayed by Russell Hittinger and Elizabeth Lev, was Franco Zeffirelli's *Jesus of Nazareth*. In that film, the Sanhedrin debated, confronted, agonized, and sought to understand the metaphors of Christ. Even the darkest voices were portrayed as possessing doubts about having made the right decision to the very end. Because it portrays the Sanhedrin as fairly monolithic, Gibson's *Passion*, an otherwise brilliant work of art, is flawed.

Edward J. Baker
Fresh Meadows, New York

I am a rabbi. I have been a student of early Christianity since my childhood. I have seen *The Passion* twice and have participated in some amazing discussions about the movie over the past weeks in formal venues and informal exchanges. As a Jew, I understand and empathize with the fears and anxieties of most of my fellow Jews about the potential for anti-Semitism, grounded as those fears are in a strong collective memory.

But as a person of faith, I also empathize and understand the response to the film on the part of believing Christians. Indeed, if the central message of Christianity is that Jesus suffered and died for all of humanity's sins—how could there not be as much blood as there is in the film? Indeed, *why wasn't there more?*

I believe—and I have seen—that this film has an incredible potential for generating deep and meaningful conversations between believing Jews and Christians. That potential will be realized if: 1) Jews will understand that because Christians really do believe what happened to Jesus was from God and not any segment of humanity, they are not necessarily anti-Jewish; 2) Christians will learn more about how Christian anti-Semitism over the past two millennia has fueled current fears and anxieties.

Rabbi Cary Kozberg
Columbus, Ohio

The Passion of the Christ includes many powerful images: of the scourging and crucifixion, as well as of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Yet I wonder if these images have clouded the ability of Russell Hittinger and Elizabeth Lev to see some significant flaws in the film.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The misrepresentations of the Gospels begin in Gethsemane, when Satan replaces the angel of the Lord sent to comfort Jesus. Certainly, Jesus' time of anguish in Gethsemane is an "opportune time" (cf. Luke 4:13) for Satan to attempt to get Jesus to abandon his mission. So it does make sense for Mr. Gibson to place Satan here in the story, even though Satan is not mentioned explicitly in the Gospel accounts of Gethsemane. However, it seems to me that it is important to keep the angel who appears to comfort Jesus (Luke 24) in the story, especially if the appearance of Satan is added. As the film stands, Satan functionally replaces the angel. The only response to Jesus' prayer is the appearance of Satan to torment him.

This change removes from the film an important point made in the Gospels: Jesus is the Beloved of the Father, and even his suffering and death do not negate that love. In the film's version of events, Jesus is abandoned by the Father before the movie starts. The prayers in Gethsemane seem to reach only Satan's ears, not the Father's. Indeed, throughout the film, the Father is absent, in appropriate faithfulness to the text of the New Testament. But this makes it all the more important to get this detail right. In the Gospels, the Father hears the prayers in Gethsemane and strengthens Jesus for the horrible ordeal to come, an ordeal which includes Jesus feeling abandoned by the Father while on the cross.

Perhaps an extremely bloody, violent film is the way to reach people in our age of extremely violent "entertainment." I do hope and pray that those who view the film come away with a greater understanding of the horrors Jesus endured to redeem us and a deeper sense of God's love for us. I hope and pray, like Professors Hittinger and Lev, that the movie drives people to the Bible and the Church. Still, I cannot help being disappointed by the film's distortions of the Christian message, especially since it easily could have been so much better.

(The Rev.) Timothy Oslovich
Trinity Lutheran Church
Vernon, Connecticut

A short demurral to the excellent article by Russell Hittinger and Elizabeth Lev. I am convinced that *The Passion* is inscribed not in the tradition of Michelangelo (think of the Pietà) but rather in the tradition best illustrated by Mathis Grünewald's Isenheim altarpiece (which was so greatly admired by the 1920s Expressionists) and by many a medieval Spanish *retablo*.

In this tradition the emphasis on the figure of Jesus Christ is presented from the point of view of suffering, torture, agony, and sacrifice. Such is the complexity and multiplicity of this figure that there should be plenty of room for interpretations along this line to accompany more common interpretations of Jesus as representing just serenity, peaceful joyfulness, resignation, and reconciliation.

I submit that a good part of the controversy about the film is due to Mr. Gibson's choice of the turbulent and intensive mode of presentation as opposed to the smooth, neoclassical aesthetic that had been almost universally accepted in the last fifty years or so—by thinkers, by artists, and by audiences of all religions. Once we understand this distinction I am persuaded that the "conflict of confessions" highlighted in our sensationalist media can be considerably defused.

Professor Virgil Nemoianu
Catholic University of America
Washington, D.C.

Russell Hittinger and Elizabeth Lev reply:
Michael Rose's self-parodying letter censures us for use of "rhetorical devices" and for failing to build "cogent arguments." Without referencing anything in the film, he accuses Mel Gibson of anti-Semitism and of inciting viewers to acts of revenge. Although a few people projected such passions onto the film, in nearly every case they were the critics, not the target audience of believing Christians. Most of the fifty million American Christians who have seen *The Passion* have come to a different conclusion than Mr. Rose. As for the "orgy of sadomasochism," Mr. Rose reminds us of the truism that what the viewer brings to a work of art will affect what he or she takes away from it, which is why a person's reaction often says more about the person than about the work itself. An interesting parallel to Mr. Rose's vision can be found in Vasari's *Life of Michelangelo*, in which papal Master of Ceremonies Biagio da Cesena was asked his opinion of the Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel. A "stew of nudes" for "public baths and taverns," he replied. Never one to suffer fools gladly, Michelangelo added Biagio to the painting as the legendary Minos, judge of Hell.

Rabbi Kozberg's remarks are most welcome. Admittedly, *The Passion* is not the easiest place to begin Christian-Jewish dialogue. Images that Christians find profoundly edifying can also be the occasion for "fears and anxieties" on the part of the Jewish community. On the one side, it has to be admitted that strongly held and deeply felt Christian theological convictions are not necessarily unjust or uncharitable to Jews; at the same time, Christians need to pay careful attention to the historic residue of anti-Jewish polemics and the always present danger of anti-Semitism.

Edward J. Baker states that *The Passion* is flawed because it presents the Sanhedrin as "fairly monolithic." He compares it unfavorably to Franco Zeffirelli's depiction of the group in *Jesus of Nazareth*. The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

problem here, of course, is taking Zeffirelli as the point of reference rather than the Gospel accounts which, if anything, present the Sanhedrin as *more* monolithic than Gibson's rendering. None of the four evangelists mentions any sort of internal division during the Sanhedrin trial. Perhaps the more important issue is not what is *in* the film but what is missing with regard to the original historical setting of these events. The Sanhedrin at that time was packed with members of Annas' own family; this group cooperated with the Romans. So the question is not whether the Sanhedrin was monolithic but whether it should be understood as representing the Jewish community. The answer is no. Neither Gibson's movie nor the others we mentioned make this point clearly enough. Mr. Baker's remedy would obscure the issue even more.

Although Pastor Oslovich goes too far in saying that *The Passion* seriously distorts the canonical text, he raises an interesting question about the angelic presence at Gethsemane. He himself notes that there are reasons to place Satan in the thick of things. Luke ends his description of Jesus' diabolic temptation in the wilderness with the words: "And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time." (Luke 4:13). Though he never tells his readers when this opportune time is, one is permitted to surmise that Luke is here referring to Jesus' temptation in Gethsemane. Note, too, Jesus' remark in Luke 22:53, just after the scene in the garden, that this is the hour of the "power of darkness." Returning to the film itself, Mr. Gibson's use of moonlight during the struggle in the garden perhaps answers Pastor Oslovich's concerns. When Jesus asks the Father "to remove this cup," the moon is obscured, darkness encroaches, and Satan arrives to dissuade. The moon then reappears, bathing Jesus in light as he lifts himself from the ground and crushes the head of the serpent.

We appreciate Virgil Nemoianu's thoughtful response to our article. When we stated that the movie is filmed in the High Renaissance tradition of Michelangelo, we were referring chiefly to the techniques designed to engage the viewer. As we emphasized, the body of Christ threatening to enter the viewers' space, as well as the spatial dynamic created by the figures and the screen—these recall elements of Michelangelo's work. Of course, Professor Nemoianu is correct that Michelangelo would not have chosen to depict Jesus with such a battered, tortured body. Nonetheless, in terms of artistic composition Mr. Gibson's Jesus resembles the painted Jesus of Grünewald's Isenheim altarpiece only superficially. While Grünewald's work owes much to the Italian tradition of dramatic anatomy, he represents Christ's body as something grotesque and unnatural. The corpse is elongated, with distended feet and hands, impossible musculature, and an exaggerated chiaroscuro that heightens the sense of nervous angst. This technique shows how unnatural and indeed antinatural the treatment of Christ has been.

By contrast, although Mr. Gibson's body of Christ has been tortured and flayed, it is portrayed in the more truthful manner typical of Caravaggio, where real pain is inflicted on a real body. Moreover, Gibson sets the body against the most austere and stark surrounding imagery, which allows for no distraction from the principal subject. Finally, Grünewald's Christ is a figure chiefly of pity. In both the *Crucifixion* and the *Lamentation,* Jesus is dead, to be mourned over. Nowhere in the flayed skin of Grünewald is there a trace of the Jesus who looked at Pilate through his one good eye and informed the Roman procurator that he would have no power were it not given from above.

Treading Out Clichés

In his review of Michael Knox-Beran's *Jefferson's Demons* (March), Wilfred McClay takes the author to task for having mixed his metaphors when he wrote that Thomas Jefferson "drew on the very traditions he censured in order to tread out his own prophetic wine." But Professor McClay must really take the matter up not with Knox-Beran but with Isaiah, to whose beautiful figure, I take it, the author was alluding in his evocation of Jefferson as a prophet of democracy: "and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have made their vintage-shouting to cease."

Much of what passes for clear writing will, if examined carefully, be found to consist of dead figures of speech, so dead that we do not notice how often they are used and how subtly they are intermixed. In his review, Prof. McClay reveals a gift for decaying and moribund figures of speech. The Jefferson Memorial, he writes "nestles peacefully amid the greenery," as though it were a nest-making bird, yet many people "take a pass" on visiting it because it is off the "beaten path." Jefferson's reputation has suffered from "erosion," while the growth of cities has "put paid" to his agrarian ideals. But although Knox-Beran's book "aims" at an admiring "view" of Jefferson "without skirting" his faults, it forces too many aspects of his life to "take a backseat" to his psyche, which Knox-Berann has not fully understood, for he failed to grasp that Jefferson, with his fear of "superstition-laced" dogmas, believed that "unimpeded" reason (reason on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

foot, that is, encountering no obstacles) would carry men across the stormy sea to a "safe harbor" (reason—in its capacity, we must suppose, as divine *logos*—being endowed by Prof. McClay with the ability to walk on water).

Let him who is without (literary) sin cast the first (figurative) stone. I do not, however, fault Professor McClay for using and mixing stale figures of speech. Every writer does, except perhaps those who, like Isaiah, have submitted to a higher dictation. A prose such as Sainte-Beuve desired, completely free of both dead and impure metaphors, must for most writers be an impossible ideal. As far as I'm concerned, though, Prof. McClay's metaphors "take a back seat" to Isaiah's.

M. Miguel Rodriguez
New Haven, Connecticut

Wilfred M. McClay replies:
M. Miguel Rodriguez is far too generous, first in according me a gift for decaying and moribund figures of speech, and then in assuring the world that he does not fault me for the exercise of that gift. I'm quite overwhelmed with gratitude, and feel obliged to return the favor. In fact, I have no trouble asserting, on the evidence of this letter alone, that Mr. Rodriguez has at least two great gifts himself. First, he has an abundance of what a lesser writer than himself might call "time on his hands." Second, he clearly has an unusual knack for what is sometimes called, by the aficionados of stale metaphor, "missing the point."

Perhaps, since he is already so manifestly endowed in these two respects, it would be uncharitable to ask for more. But I have this troublesome interest in the substance of things. It would have been interesting, for example, to know how Mr. Rodriguez's explicit identification of Beran's allusion to Isaiah alters in any way my assessment of its usage in this context, rhetorically and substantively. (Particularly when my chief aim, stated in the very next sentence, was to credit Beran with having made, despite his tendency to overwrite, a point that is not only correct but profound.) Before this moment, I never knew that in complaining about the misuse of a biblical text I was elevating my own metaphors above those of the Bible.

If I, too, had the gift of limitless free time, I'm sure I could learn even more from this letter. I would have time to ponder, for example, how it is that the publication of a mildly critical book review resembles the stoning of an adulteress, and how Mr. Rodriguez resembles Jesus Christ. It is not quite fair of Mr. Rodriguez to tantalize us so, with mere glimpses of his wisdom and goodness. But since he is not faulting me, I shall not fault him.

Godless Juries

I read with much dismay Robert T. Miller's "A Jury of One's Godless Peers" (March). How the Third Circuit Court of Appeals could hold in *United States v. DeJesus* that a peremptory challenge based on religion (as opposed to a challenge based on race or gender) does not violate the Constitution is baffling.

The puzzling part of the court's reasoning is the distinction between belonging to a certain religious denomination and "heightened religious involvement." If the same reasoning were invoked to allow discrimination on the basis of race or gender, there would be a public outcry. But, then again, I am quite sure that no judge would try to justify a black man being held off a jury on the grounds that his membership in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People demonstrated "heightened racial involvement," which would, in turn, make it impossible for him to judge the facts of a case impartially.

Even without conducting an analysis of the relative evils of racial, sexual, or religious discrimination, this type of reasoning is repugnant and legally wrong. According to the Supreme Court, governmental action that discriminates on the basis of gender is subject to an "intermediate scrutiny" standard of review, while discrimination based on race and religion are subject to "strict scrutiny," which requires that a compelling state interest be at stake. In view of this high standard, it is not apparent why seeing the world through the prism of heightened religious involvement should disqualify one from jury service.

Hugh M. Smith, Jr.
New York, New York

Robert T. Miller replies:
I agree with the conclusions of Hugh M. Smith, and I have one additional observation about the Third Circuit's distinction between mere affiliation with some particular religious denomination and "heightened religious involvement," regardless of confession. This distinction is not so puzzling when we remember two facts about ideological secularism.

First, the primary tenet of ideological secularism is that the ultimate good for man consists in something obtainable in this life. From this it follows that all doctrinal differences among religions are trivial; what counts is that they all challenge secularism by holding that the good for man is not, at least not fully, obtainable in this life. Second, ideological secularism is compatible with a certain kind of participation in organized religion. Thus some secular people attend church services because they think such attendance serves some cultural or moral purpose relevant to their secular vision of the good for man in this life.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Taken together, these two facts explain the Third Circuit's distinction between mere affiliation with a particular religious denomination and what the court calls "heightened religious involvement," regardless of denomination. For secular people, the differences between denominations are mere matters of taste. But the difference between secular people (of whatever denomination) and religious people (of whatever denomination) *is* morally significant to the secularist because it involves a substantive disagreement about the nature of the good—whether that good is ultimately found in this world or not. Thus, from the point of view of ideological secularism, the distinction the Third Circuit drew makes perfect sense.

In a way, this result is not surprising. Fallen human beings tend to dislike those who disagree with them on fundamental issues, and whenever proponents of one belief system have held unchallenged power in a society, they have almost always used that power to discriminate against dissenters. Secular people discriminate as much as, and probably more than, other people. That they fancy themselves above such things is a measure of how little they understand themselves.

"Pharisees"

As a grateful inheritor of the tradition of rabbinic Judaism, rooted in the teachings of the Pharisees, I must take exception to the offhand reference to my ancient teachers in R. V. Young's discussion of *The Merchant of Venice* in "The Bard, the Black, the Jew" (March).

A century of scholarship has dispelled the hoary caricature of the Pharisees as legalistic, self-righteous hypocrites; yet the caricature continues to circulate. Some film reviewers have even identified the persecutors of Jesus in Mel Gibson's current film as Pharisees, even though Pharisees do not appear in the Gospels' passion narratives (the first-century High Priest and his entourage would have been known as "Sadducees.")

It would have been helpful for the editor to place Professor Young's reference to Pharisees (entirely understandable within a discussion of the English literary tradition) within quotation marks, as was properly done with the reference to the egregious term "the Jewish lobby" elsewhere in the same issue.

Rabbi Shamai Kanter
Canandaigua, New York

R. V. Young replies:
I am happy to acknowledge the justice of Rabbi Kanter's complaint, and I regret not putting "Pharisee" in quotation marks in the original text, since I apply the term ironically at the expense of the Christian character Antonio.

Constitutional Reminders

In "Publick Religion: Adams v. Jefferson" (March), John Witte, Jr. reminds us of John Adams' and Thomas Jefferson's views on the proper relationship between church and state. However, he conspicuously fails to focus on the one source of a rough consensus statement of the Founders' views that we have readily available. This is the text of the Constitution itself. We all know of its anti-establishment and free exercise provisions. Perhaps more relevant to Professor Witte's point is the clause that says that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States" (Article VI, Clause 3).

This wisdom of the Founders, like Aquinas' admonition that the positive law ought not to forbid every sin, needs to be at the center of our politics lest we repeat the consistent errors of others when they join the power of God to the power of government.

Walter J. Kendall III
The John Marshall Law School
Chicago, Illinois

The Virtues of Penance

Lay people deeply distressed by the scandals that have rocked the Catholic Church certainly appreciate Richard John Neuhaus' "The Bishops get their Report Card" (Public Square, March). Referring to Father John J. Coughlin's article, he shows that, alas, canon law has been in abeyance even though it gives precise answers to the question of how certain sins are to be dealt with. It is, as he so rightly says, the triumph of the therapeutic over the laws of the Church. No doubt the climate of the time favors compassion, mildness, and understanding. Psychology is valuable indeed when it is based on a sound metaphysics, but when it relies on a false philosophy, it is disastrous.

The lives of the saints tell us that those who have "reached the heights" have practiced various forms of severe penance. Since Vatican II, this piece of wisdom seems to have been forgotten. The laws of fasting and abstinence have been reduced to an absolute minimum. Meat can be eaten on Fridays, Ember days have been abolished. Children going to "Catholic" schools never hear the word "sacrifice." I wonder if classical means of penance, such as hairshirts and discipline, should not be brought back into religious life. The discomfort created by the former and the pain caused by the latter are supposed to be powerful helps in resisting certain temptations. This is what the wisdom of the past has always taught.

Has any bishop confronting a priest who has fallen into the grave sin of abusing a young boy ever

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thought of recommending this "medicine"? In the past the members of strict religious orders took the discipline as a matter of course. St. Thérèse of Lisieux scourged herself so severely that it brought tears to her eyes. St. Francis de Sales, who founded the mildest of all religious orders—the Visitation, an order opened to elderly people or women of frail health—nevertheless recommended that his daughters take discipline; he even recommended it to lay people. Saintly diocesan priests have used it. St. Thomas More, who was a layman, used it. It worked in the past, and one wonders whether, if it were reintroduced not only in religious orders but also in seminaries, the scourge of sexual perversions would disappear. As Christ said to his disciples, there are certain types of devils that can only be chased by fasting, sacrifice, and prayer.

Alice von Hildebrand
New Rochelle, New York

Of Time and the River

I love the way the river rollicks here,
and how it sluices headlong down the hill
to hurtle through these spruces in a thrill
of spray. Up-slope, beneath the glacier's sheer
façade, this melt of snow that fell the year
the earth was made emerges as a rill;
then, far downstream, it scours the rocks until
they granulate, dissolve and disappear.

But in this place, we see how fine a mill
has been at work, imparting its severe
but sure perfection to the stones that fill
its bed. And so it is with us, my dear—
two cobbles, tumbled in the stream, to cheer
the heart of Him who polishes us still.

Bill Daugherty

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Opinion

Religion Uniquely Disfavored

Robert T. Miller

While some scholars have argued that there is, in terms of both grammar and purpose, only one religion clause in the First Amendment, the language of the courts has typically been framed in terms of an "establishment clause" and a "free exercise clause," and the presumed goal is then to find an accomodation between the two clauses. Most of the cases involving religion heard by the United States Supreme Court are brought by unbelievers asserting that some governmental action violates the establishment clause, which provides that government "shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion."

In recent years, many such cases have been decided in ways favorable to religion, notably in *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* (2002), which upheld the constitutionality of a school-voucher program in Cleveland. Seldom, however, does the Court hear a case brought by believers asserting that some governmental action lviolates the free exercise clause, which provides that government shall make no law "prohibiting the free exercise" of religion. The reason for this is that the American people have not often used the power of government against religion.

In February 2004, however, the Court decided a free exercise case in *Locke v. Davey*. The facts of the case are straightforward. The state of Washington established a scholarship program for students who meet certain academic and financial criteria and study at an accredited college within the state. At the same time, the relevant statute, implementing a similar provision in Washington's constitution, provided that "no aid shall be awarded to any student who is pursuing a degree in theology," which the parties agreed meant "devotional" theology, not merely the scholarly investigation of religion. The plaintiff, Joshua Davey, met all of the applicable criteria, but because one of his majors was pastoral ministry (the other was business administration), he was denied a scholarship worth almost three thousand dollars. He sued the state, claiming that Washington's decision to except only theology students from the benefits it provides under the program violated his free exercise rights. But the Supreme Court, in an opinion by Chief Justice William Rehnquist, held by a vote of 7-2 that Washington's scholarship program is constitutional. Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas dissented.

The case should have been easy. When by its very terms a law discriminates on bases that the Court thinks deserve special protection—such as race, or the content of one's speech, or, as in this case, religion—the Court subjects the law to "strict scrutiny," meaning that it will sustain the law only if it serves a "compelling government interest" by "narrowly tailored means." That is, a law discriminating on such a basis will survive constitutional challenge only if it serves some very important end by means that discriminate only to the extent necessary to achieve that end. In *Church of Lukumi Babula Aye, Inc. v. Hialeah* (1993), for example, the Supreme Court applied strict scrutiny in striking down a law that prohibited ritualistic animal sacrifice of the kind practiced in the Santeria religion. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, which heard the *Davey* case before it was appealed to the Supreme Court, had also applied strict scrutiny to Washington's scholarship program and concluded that excepting only students studying theology served no compelling governmental interest and so was unconstitutional.

But the Chief Justice's opinion in *Davey* changed all this. The opinion declines to apply strict scrutiny but never states under which of various less stringent standards it is reviewing the law. Nor does it announce a general principle that it thinks controls the case. Rather, its reasoning proceeds in stages.

The opinion begins by noting that, had the state allowed its scholarship program to fund students studying theology, this would not have violated the establishment clause. In other words, there is no constitutional requirement that students studying theology be excluded from the program. Given the Court's recent decision in *Zelman*, this part of the decision was clearly right. Since the Court wants to say, however, that Washington's scholarship program is constitutional, the opinion appeals to what it calls "the play in the joints" between the establishment clause and the free exercise clause—that is, the class of government actions neither prohibited by the former nor required by the latter.

The Court next distinguishes *Lukumi* from *Davey* by saying that Joshua Davey was not being subjected to criminal or civil penalties; he was only losing a public benefit, his scholarship, of a kind that others enjoy. This is true as far as it goes, but it is not a distinction that the Court generally recognizes in such

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

contexts. In an age in which citizens receive all manner of financial benefits from the government, from social security payments to unemployment compensation to government-backed student loans, clearly the free exercise clause should prevent the government from discriminating on the basis of religion in providing such benefits. In other contexts, such as that of government discrimination based on speech or race, the Court has generally recognized this. As Justice Scalia wrote in his dissent in *Davey*, "When the state makes a public benefit generally available, that benefit becomes part of the baseline against which burdens on religion are measured."

Responding to Justice Scalia on this point, the majority opinion comes to what is, I think, the real issue. The state funding in this case is supporting training for the ministry, which, the Court argues, "is an essentially religious endeavor" that is "akin to a religious calling as well as an academic pursuit." That is, the Court will allow government to discriminate against religion in providing public benefits when individual recipients choose to use those benefits for essentially religious purposes (e.g., training for the ministry), but it will not allow government to discriminate against religion in providing public benefits when the benefits are being used in ways not essentially religious. This kind of discrimination against religion is justified, in the Court's view, because the state of Washington has a "historical and substantial" interest in not funding activities such as studying for the ministry.

What are we to make of this claim of a "historical and substantial" interest? On the historical issue, the Court notes that many states around the time of the founding placed in their constitutions formal prohibitions against using public funds to support the ministry, and, it argues, the state of Washington's refusal to fund Davey's theology degree thus comports with the original understanding of the free exercise clause. But this is entirely unconvincing, for, as Justice Scalia notes, all of these founding-era laws were proscribing special benefits that only the clergy would enjoy, not generally available benefits that the clergy might receive on equal terms with everyone else. The modern welfare state being inconceivable at the time of the founding, such legislation does not suggest that the framers of the federal Constitution intended to allow religious training to be subject to special disapproval by the state.

More important, prior to *Davey* it seemed that states had no establishment clause interests other than in avoiding violations of it. The Supreme Court now says that a state can have a substantial establishment clause interest in not doing something (i.e., giving Davey his scholarship) that the Court has also specifically said would not violate that clause. If true, this opens the door to much discrimination against religion in the provision of public benefits because, in the Court's jurisprudence, "substantial" governmental interests can in certain cases support significant discrimination.

But the Court is patently wrong when it says that a state can have an establishment clause interest in not doing something that the establishment clause allows, for this would require a miracle of logic. It amounts to saying that it is very important to keep church and state separate in ways in which their cooperation is entirely permissible. This is, on its face, incoherent. When smart people say such silly things, something unspoken is probably at work.

And I think I know what it is. As I recently wrote in these pages (FT March), the Third Circuit Court of Appeals held last year in *United States v. DeJesus* that a government prosecutor may use peremptory challenges to remove jurors who display a "heightened religious involvement" as evidenced by much reading of Scripture and extensive participation in church activities. That court said it would not allow religion-based challenges to be used against members of particular denominations, but it would allow challenges against those who show "a rather consuming propensity to experience the world through a prism of religious beliefs." In other words, government may not discriminate among religions, but it may discriminate against devoutly religious people of whatever religion.

The same force is at work in *Davey*. Certainly the Supreme Court would not allow government to discriminate in providing public benefits in favor of some religious groups and against others—as if Protestants were to receive larger social security checks than Catholics. But when the discrimination is in favor of the dominant belief system of our intellectuals (aggressive secularism) and at the expense of that system's primary rival (orthodox religion), then the Court will allow a certain measure of discrimination. Justice Scalia has sniffed it out: "Let there be no doubt," he notes in his *Davey* dissent, "this case is about discrimination against a religious minority. Most citizens of this country identify themselves as professing some religious belief, but the state's policy poses no obstacle to practitioners of only a tepid, civic version of faith. Those the statutory exclusion actually affects—those whose belief in their religion is so strong that they dedicate their study and their lives to its ministry—are a far narrower set." *Davey*, like *DeJesus*, involves religious discrimination of the kind that in practice matters most today: discrimina-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion by thoroughly secular people against devoutly religious people.

This discrimination may seem trivial because it is limited to the matter of providing public benefits, but this is wrong, for two reasons. First, such discrimination has no logical endpoint. Davey, for example, was denied a scholarship to which he was otherwise entitled because he wanted to use it to study theology; if he was also entitled to social security or welfare payments, would the Court say that government may deny him these benefits, too, if he wants to use them to study theology or—an even more essentially religious endeavor—to support the worship life of his church?

I do not seriously suggest that the Court would ever reach so unthinkable a result (though of course many things that were once unthinkable have eventually come to pass in the Court's jurisprudence). But I do say that the Court has no principled way to distinguish such a result from the result in *Davey*—which means that the decision in *Davey* is a lawless one.

Second, the decision is important because it is unjust. In 1779, Thomas Jefferson, in his "Draft for a Bill Establishing Religious Freedom," wrote that "to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions he disbelieves, is sinful and tyrannical." For good or ill, the United States—which taxes its citizens to support the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, hundreds of state universities, thousands of public schools, all manner of scientific research and publication, National Public Radio, the Smithsonian Museum, the Library of Congress, and thousands of other institutions—has long ago passed the point in its history when it could subscribe to Jefferson's punctilious view of the matter. If we maintain a Jeffersonian view of the separation of church and state—or, as the Court would now have it, if we recognize establishment clause interests that justify denying to religious people public benefits otherwise generally available—then religion will be uniquely disfavored in all areas of life into which government expands. Allowing government to disfavor religion in this way amounts to imposing a tax on everyone and distributing its benefits to everyone except the religious. The economic effect is exactly the same as imposing a special tax on the religious for the benefit of the secular. It's robbing Peter to pay Caesar.

And what happened to Joshua Davey, who originally went to college to train for the ministry? He just finished his first year at Harvard Law School.

Robert T. Miller is a John M. Olin, Jr. Research Fellow in Law at the Columbia University Law School.

Hinduism and Terror

Paul Marshall

Since September 11, 2001, the world's attention has properly been focused on the violence of Islamic extremism, but there are also major violent trends in Hindu extremism that have largely been ignored in the United States. In India, this violence is supported by Hindu extremists and their allies in the Indian government, which is currently led by the Bharatiya Janata Party.

One reason for our lack of attention here is that India is not a religiously reactionary state like Saudi Arabia or Iran, and in fact faces its own threats from Islamist militants in Indian-controlled Kashmir, as well as Islamist terrorist attacks throughout the country, most notably the dramatic storming of the Indian parliament in 2001 and the deadly bombing in Bombay that killed fifty-two people in August 2003. India is a strong ally in the war on terrorism and continues to have strong democratic traditions and institutions. It has developed friendlier relations with America and Israel; Ariel Sharon made a state visit in September. The Indian government has also loosened the previously heavily regulated economy to produce one of the highest growth rates in the world, and the Bombay stock market rose 50 percent in 2003. Yet despite these strengths, there is much sectarian hatred in India and it is expressed in frequent, sometimes programmatic, violence.

In the past decade, extremist Hindus have increased their attacks on Christians, until there are now several hundred per year. But this did not make news in the U.S. until a foreigner was attacked. In 1999, Graham Staines, an Australian missionary who had worked with leprosy patients for three decades, was burned alive in Orissa along with his two young sons. The brutal violence visited on Muslims in Gujarat in February 2002 also brought the dangers of Hindu extremism to world attention. Between one and two thousand Muslims were massacred after Muslims reportedly set fire to a train carrying Hindu nationalists, killing several dozen people.

These attacks were not inchoate mob violence, triggered by real or rumored insult; rather, they involved careful planning by organized Hindu extremists with an explicit program and a developed religious-nationalist ideology. Like the ideology of al-Qaeda and other radical Islamists, this ideology began to take shape in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the 1920s as a response to European colonialism. It rejected the usually secular outlook of other independence movements; in place of secularism, it synthesized a reactionary form of religion with elements of European millenarian political thought, especially fascism.

Until the nineteenth century, the word "Hindu" had no specific religious meaning and simply referred to the people who lived east of the Indus River, whatever their beliefs. (The Indian Supreme Court itself has held that "no precise meaning can be ascribed to the terms 'Hindu' and 'Hinduism.'") It was only when the census introduced by the British colonial authorities in 1871 included Hindu as a religious designation that many Indians began to think of themselves and their country as Hindu.

Twentieth-century agitation against the British led to the rise not only of the secular and socialist Congress movement but also of the rival Hindu nationalist movement collectively known as the Sangh Parivar ("family of organizations"). The Parivar proclaims an ideology of "Hindutva," aimed at ensuring the predominance of Hinduism in Indian society, politics, and culture, which it promotes through tactics that include violence and terror. Its agenda includes subjugating or driving out Muslims and Christians, who total some 17 percent of the population. It castigates them as foreign faiths, imposed by foreign conquerors—even though Christians trace their origins in India to the Apostle Thomas in the first century and Islam came to India in the seventh and eighth centuries.

The Sangh Parivar's central organization is the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), founded by Keshav Hedgewar in 1925. Hedgewar was influenced by V. D. Savarkar, who believed that Hindus were the descendants of the ancient Aryans and properly formed a nation with a unified geography, race, and culture. Savarkar's 1923 book *Hindutva—Who is a Hindu?* declared that those who did not consider India as both fatherland and holy land were not true Indians —and that the love of Indian Christians and Muslims for India was "divided" because each group had its own holy land in the Middle East.

M. S. Golwalkar, the RSS's *sarsangchalak* (supreme director) from 1940 to 1973, sharpened these themes. In 1938, commenting on the Nuremberg racial laws, he declared: "Germany has also shown how well-nigh impossible it is for races and cultures, having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us . . . to learn and profit by." In an address to RSS members the same year, he also asserted: "If we Hindus grow stronger, in time Muslim friends . . . will have to play the part of German Jews." He insisted that "the non-Hindu . . . must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and revere Hindu religion. . . . Or [they] may stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges." On March 25, 1939, the Hindu nationalist Mahasabha Party, an RSS ally, likewise proclaimed: "Germany's solemn idea of the revival of the Aryan culture, the glorification of the swastika, her patronage of Vedic learning, and the ardent championship of Indo-Germanic civilization are welcomed by the religious and sensible Hindus of India with a jubilant hope."

This racism and religious and cultural chauvinism brought the Sangh Parivar into conflict with other strands of Hinduism, especially those taught by Mahatma Gandhi. Golwalkar castigated Gandhi as being soft on Muslims, while Gandhi in turn called the RSS "a communal body with a totalitarian outlook." Hindu nationalists blamed Gandhi for the partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan in 1947 and accused him of dismembering Mother India. The conflict did not stop at words: Gandhi's assassin was Nathuram Godse, a former RSS member and Savarkar associate.

The RSS is now a major paramilitary organization with millions of members. Its educational wing, the Vidya Bharati, has some twenty thousand educational institutes, with one hundred thousand teachers and two million students. The Vidya Bharati schools distribute booklets containing a map of India that encompasses not only Pakistan and Bangladesh but also the entire region of Bhutan, Nepal, Tibet, and parts of Myanmar, all under the heading "Punya Bhoomi Bharat," the "Indian Holy Land." The RSS also has separate organizations for tribal peoples, intellectuals, teachers, slum dwellers, leprosy patients, cooperatives, consumers, newspapers, industrialists, Sikhs, ex-servicemen, overseas Indians, and an organization for religion and proselytization, as well as trade unions, student and economic organizations, and a women's chapter.

Other Sangh Parivar organizations include the Bajrang Dal and the Vishnu Hindu Parishad (VHP-World Hindu Council), which engage in propaganda, virulent hate campaigns, and sometimes violence against religious minorities. The VHP was formed in 1964 to unite Hindu groups and serve as the RSS's bridge to sympathetic religious leaders. It has sought to radicalize Hindus by claiming that Hindus are under threat from an "exploding" Muslim population and a spate of Christian conversions, and it organized the 1992 nationwide demonstrations that culminated in the destruction of the Ayodhya mosque by Hindu mobs.

In January 2003, the head of the RSS described the Jesuits in India as the "pope's soldiers" and alleged that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they had taken an oath to use "violence and barbaric means to decimate all those who don't follow the Roman Catholic religion." Sangh Parivar groups have also been pressing for a ban on religious conversions from Hinduism, which they allege are being done by "force, fraud, and inducement." They accuse Christian missionaries (who comprise about one half of one percent of the Christians in India) of converting people by offering them money, medical help, and education. Because of this widespread Hindu extremist propaganda, it now appears that a majority of Hindus support a ban on Hindus changing their religion.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has since 1998 formed the national government of India at the head of a coalition of centrist parties, is tied to the RSS, VHP, and Bajrang Dal, and functions as the Sangh Parivar's political wing. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee publicly praises the RSS, attends its functions, and has feted the organization's leadership at his residence. Other senior BJP officials, such as Home Affairs Minister L. K. Advani, are RSS associates. At the national level the BJP advances the ideology of Hindutva through propaganda, the manipulation of cultural institutions, undercutting laws that protect religious minorities, and minimizing or excusing Hindu extremist violence. At the state level its functionaries have abetted and even participated in such violence.

The BJP appoints school officials who alter textbooks and curricula to emphasize Hinduism; they also require that Hindu texts be taught in all schools. Moreover, it has appointed Sangh Parivar adherents to key positions in autonomous bodies such as the Prasar Bharati, which controls the official media, the National Film Development Corporation, the Indian Council of Historical Research, and the National Book Trust.

BJP lawmakers have also attempted to restrict minority religious groups' international contacts and to reduce their rights to build places of worship. It works to pass anti-conversion laws and to alter the personal laws that govern marriages, adoptions, and inheritance. It practices legal discrimination against Dalits ("untouchables") who are Christian and Muslim, but not against those who are Hindu. With BJP support, laws have recently been adopted in Tamil Nadu and Gujarat states that restrict the ability of Hindus to change their religion, and proposals for national restrictions have been made. Pope John Paul II described these developments in June 2003 as "unjust" and said they prohibited "free exercise of the natural right to religious freedom."

The current legal status of religious conversion in India is ambiguous. In a 1977 judgment, the Supreme Court ruled that "converting" people was not a fundamental right, that conversions could potentially impinge on freedom of conscience, and that, if conversions disrupt community life, they could amount to "disturbing public order." The states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, and Arunachal Pradesh have a legal ban on "forced conversion." Officials of the National Commission for Minorities, a government body with the mandate to protect minorities, believe that such laws are unconstitutional; and despite many investigations into allegations, no "forced conversions" have ever been documented or proven.

While restrictions on conversion—or, more precisely, restrictions on the legal recognition that someone has in fact converted—affect all Indians, they are particularly onerous for Dalits. Because of their desperate status in Indian society, many lower-caste Hindus have considered converting in order to escape their religiously defined plight (most Christians in India are from Dalit background). In 1956, B. R. Ambedkar, a Dalit leader, declared that he had converted to Buddhism to escape Hinduism. Perhaps as many as one hundred thousand Dalits have followed his example. In 1981, about a thousand Dalits converted to Islam in Tamil Nadu. In August 2002, 250 Dalit youth from the same area converted to Christianity. Apart from their directly religious significance, such conversions erode the dominance of traditional Hinduism's higher castes, especially the Brahmins, and undercut the power of landowners, generally higher-caste, over their laborers, who are frequently lower-caste. The attempts to forbid religious conversion are also attempts to keep the underclass in its place.

The BJP policies on Hindutva and conversion coincide with increasingly violent attacks by Hindu militants on religious minorities. Attacks on Christians, especially in the states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Orissa, have surged in recent years. India's Home Ministry (internal security) and its National Commission for Minorities officially list over a hundred religiously motivated attacks against Christians per year, but the real number is certainly higher, as Indian journalists estimate that only some ten percent of incidents are ever reported. These attacks include murders of missionaries and priests, sexual assault on nuns, ransacking of churches, convents, and other Christian institutions, desecration of cemeteries, and Bible burnings.

The other major target of Hindu extremists is the Muslim community, which is haunted by the fear of recurrent communal riots that have taken the lives of thousands of Muslims and Hindus since Indian independence. During the outbreak of violence in Gujarat in February 2002, many of the victims were burned

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

alive or dismembered while police and BJP state government authorities either stood by or joined in. The mobs had with them lists of homes and businesses owned by Muslims, lists that they could have acquired only from government sources.

After the massacre, state BJP officials also impeded the investigation. In the high-profile "Best Bakery Case," a judge dismissed charges against twenty-one defendants on trial for setting fire to a Muslim-owned bakery and killing and injuring its owners because the main witness, a nineteen-year-old girl, stated that she could not identify any of the attackers. She later told the press that "she testified falsely after local Hindu politicians repeatedly threatened her family . . . and after concluding that prosecutors, who made no effort to meet with her before the trial, were not serious about gaining convictions." On September 12, 2003, the Chief Justice of India's Supreme Court expressed his disgust with the situation by declaring publicly that he has "no faith left in the prosecution and the Gujarat government."

Following the violence, Gujarat's Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, a BJP member, called upon his supporters to "teach a lesson" to those who "believe in multiplying the population," referring to Muslims. Other Sangh Parivar officials were even more explicitly threatening. VHP International President Ashok Singhal described the Gujarat carnage as a "successful experiment" and warned that it would be repeated all over India. After the December 2002 BJP election victory in Gujarat, VHP General Secretary Pravin Togadia declared, "All Hindutva opponents will get the death sentence, and we will leave this to the people to carry out. The process of forming a Hindu rule in the country has begun with Gujarat, and VHP will take the Gujarat experiment to every nook and corner of the country."

To maintain the political coalition that enables it to rule at the national level, the BJP downplays its specifically religious goals and portrays itself as a moderate party. But it also allies with the Sangh Parivar to appeal to its base. In its 2004 recommendations, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom proposed that India be included on the State Department's official shortlist of the worst religious persecutors for its "egregious, systematic, and ongoing" violations of religious rights.

Since it is the world's largest democracy, good relations with India are important to the U.S. It is also a growing trading partner, a possible geopolitical counterweight to China, and a strong U.S. ally in the war on terrorism. But the growth of often-violent Hindu nationalism threatens India's tolerant traditions and pluralistic democracy. If religious extremism continues to grow, it will, as we have learned elsewhere, drag India's democracy, economy, and foreign policy down with it. In the face of such a threat, we cannot afford to be silent.

Paul Marshall is a Senior Fellow at Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom. Among his recent books are Islam at the Crossroads *(2002);* God and the Constitution: Christianity and American Politics *(2002); and the Center's recent report,* The Rise of Hindu Extremism.

The Passion's Passionate Despisers

Kenneth L. Woodward

What are we to make of *l'affaire Gibson* now that his film has turned out to be a huge box-office success? Those who, like me, were deeply moved by *The Passion of the Christ* and judged it to be not anti-Semitic have no reason to gloat. The cultural clashes over the film opened wounds we thought had healed, and they exposed currents of hostility toward Christianity that one would have hoped had disappeared. The freewheeling commentary in the general media, with a few notable exceptions, was pitched at too low a level to call this a teaching moment. But it certainly was a moment to listen and learn—and, at times, to laugh.

Last summer, it should be recalled, Gibson's project was on very shaky legs. He had not as yet found a distributor for a film in which he had invested twenty-five million dollars of his own money. After reading a "received" copy of the script, a self-selected group of six scholars, most of them veterans of Jewish-Christian dialogue, complained of un-Biblical and anti-Semitic stereotypes. One of the group, Paula Fredriksen of Boston University, wrote a long and fearful essay, "Mad Mel," in the *New Republic*, predicting that "violence" would break out upon the film's release. Immediately, Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, orchestrated a campaign to label the film anti-Semitic. That really got Mel mad, and he responded by showing nearly finished versions of the movie to selected audiences, most of which consisted of politically conservative pundits and evangelical Christians. None of them seemed to find the film anti-Semitic—but then few of them were Jews. To columnists such as Frank Rich of the *New York Times*,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gibson's screening strategy was part of a "political-cultural war" pitting Jews against Christians, including the Bush White House and the whole conservative wing of the chattering classes.

Thus began an opéra bouffe that eventually involved a huge cast, including, on the pro-Gibson side, the pope (apparently) and Billy Graham and his son Franklin (certainly), and featuring Gibson-denouncing appearances by Andrew Greeley and Elaine Pagels, among many others. It also featured Foxman and his competitor in Jewish defense, Rabbi Marvin Heir, director of the Simon Weisenthal Center in Los Angeles, surreptitiously slipping into pre-release screenings. Gibson's publicity people countered their reports with stories of miracles and conversion experiences on Gibson's set in Italy. The Catholic League came to Gibson's defense, while a Jewish website, Messiah Truth, called on Attorney General John Ashcroft to investigate Gibson for hate crimes. As prophylactics against a possible outbreak of anti-Semitism, the Catholic bishops and the National Council of Churches published guidelines for watching the film. Appealing to higher authority, Foxman flew to Rome to ask the Vatican to tell all bishops that Gibson's movie is not "the gospel truth."

Hollywood, predictably, backed away from Gibson, thinking him toxic. But once he found a distributor the effort to render the film financially dead on arrival turned into a boon. Richard Land, the president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, scrutinized the film for signs of "creeping excessive Catholicism" and found none, thus clearing a path to the theater door for ten million Southern Baptists. Other Evangelicals also rallied to Gibson and his film, not because they lack Jesus films of their own, but because they saw the clash over his film as part of a battle between Christianity and secularism. It is likely that those who tried to paint Gibson and his work as anti-Semitic guaranteed, ironically, his unexpected box office success. With enemies like these, who needs friends?

In any case, long before his film opened, Gibson's every comment was closely examined for signs of anti-Semitism. He was denounced by Rich of the *Times* and others as a "Holocaust denier" because he noted in one interview that Jews were not the only people victimized by the Nazis. "Gotcha, Mel!" was the collective response. Gibson's disposition as a traditionalist Catholic who loves the Latin Mass and is critical of liberal trends since the Second Vatican Council was routinely interpreted as meaning that he therefore rejects the Church's formal repudiation (in *Nostra Aetate*, 1965) of the charge of deicide against the Jews. Gibson was repeatedly visited with the sins of his father, the aged, addled, and frankly anti-Semitic Hutton Gibson. Admirably, Gibson did not allow Diane Sawyer to provoke him into denouncing his father during his hour-long interview on CBS, and with great patience entertained Ms. Sawyer's headline-seeking question: "Are you anti-Semitic?"

So what is to be learned from all of this? First, Christians and Jews alike can rejoice over the dog that did not bark. Except for one unsettled Pentecostal pastor in Colorado there have been no reported incidents of anti-Semitism related to Gibson's film. That is remarkable, considering how many millions of Americans have seen the film, and more so because the media have been primed to report any such incidents. Indeed, it was a golden opportunity for any crank looking for headlines to make his voice heard. The lesson, though, is not that in "tolerant" America Jews and Christians now understand each other. As their widely different reactions to the film suggest, there's a lot of misunderstanding yet to confront.

No question, Christians and Jews saw two different films. As John Leo astutely observed in his syndicated column, they walked into the film with different emotions and different preconceptions—and walked out with them intact. Christians know the plotline and most assume as fact that Jesus died for their sins. No wonder so many wept—for Jesus the suffering servant and for themselves as sinners "washed in the blood of the lamb." Jews who have seen the film (including professional film critics) arrived wary, alert for evidence of anti-Semitism and armed with some knowledge of passion plays past. The story Gibson filmed is not, as one Orthodox rabbi rightly wrote on his website, "our story." *New Yorker* critic David Denby, who identifies himself as a secular Jew, bemoaned in his acerbic review the absence of "the electric charge of hope and redemption Jesus Christ brought into the world." But had this been "his" story, Denby might have realized that that Jesus was right before his eyes, in every frame. Gibson's Christ is not the parable-telling, *halacha*-defying rabbi that Reform Judaism at its origins more than a century ago promoted as a figure closer to its own tradition than to Christianity. Rather, he is in this passion—as in the Gospel passion narratives—the obedient son of the Father. As I pointed out in an op-ed piece in the *New York Times* on Ash Wednesday, the death of Jesus is the one aspect of the Gospels that no other religion can accept. But without *that* Jesus there would be no resurrected Christ, and without *that* Christ there would be no Jesus available to make a film about—whether by DeMille, by Pasolini, by Scorsese, or by Gibson.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In sum, in the months leading up to the release of *The Passion of the Christ* the only issue that seemed to matter in the media was whether the director was guilty of anti-Semitism. In attenuated form, anti-Semitism was also the subject of the February 16 cover story in *Newsweek*, which had won the heated competition among the three newsweeklies for the exclusive right to screen the film early (I was among those admitted) and to feature it on its cover. The question in its cover line, "Who Really Killed Jesus?" introduced writer Jon Meacham's earnest and careful exploration of whether Gibson had been faithful to the Gospels and whether the Gospels themselves were trustworthy as history. On the first point, it was obvious that Gibson had gone beyond the Scriptures at several points, as film directors, and all artistic interpreters, are wont to do. To address the second point, however, is to scamper down a hole that no prudent rabbit would dare enter, given the long and complex history of biblical scholarship itself.

The consensus of New Testament scholars is that from Mark to Matthew and Luke, the Gospel writers shifted the burden of responsibility for the death of Jesus from the Romans to the Jews. But as the late Raymond Brown demonstrated in detail in his magisterial two volumes, *The Death of the Messiah*, "the theory that the Gospels exculpate the Romans by creating a totally fictional, sympathetic Pilate has been overdone." In particular, Brown shows that the assessments of Pilate in the writings of Tacitus and especially Philo of Alexandria are not to be taken at face value—as Meacham takes them—because both writers had political axes to grind. In short, while Gibson surely overdraws the role of Caiaphas, Meacham underestimates the political vulnerability of Pilate, who stands vilified in Christian tradition as a weak magistrate who condemned a just man to death.

None of this would matter if the *Newsweek* story, published two weeks before the film's Ash Wednesday opening, had not become received wisdom to the Scripture-lacking and symbol-impaired commentators who followed in Meacham's wake. Bowing to Meacham, Denby in the *New Yorker* charged Gibson with "serious mischief" in assigning responsibility for the death of Jesus, failing to recognize any of the scenes that place responsibility for Jesus' death on all sinful human beings. In an equally clueless review in the *Washington Post*, Ann Hornaday asserted the film's "startling lack of historical context" and declared: "That Jesus and his followers were themselves Jewish is a fact either elided or ignored" by the director. Was she looking for identification tags? Christ—need anyone be reminded?—was not a Christian.

The word "medieval" occurred quite frequently in reviews as a pejorative. In a discussion of the film with this writer on National Public Radio, Denby complained of Gibson's "odd medieval touches like Satan hanging around among all the Jews through the scourging and all through the Crucifixion, which is not in the Gospels. That's an anti-Semitic medieval hangover that I found very disturbing." One should not have to remind a man who makes his living reviewing movies that Gibson's Satan—a figure out of an Ingmar Bergman film, as *Newsweek*'s film reviewer David Anson aptly noted—functions throughout this film as the visual and constant reminder of the temptation to terminal despair that tortures Jesus even more than his physical punishment. Note to Mr. Denby: Satan is not a medieval invention; he figures prominently as the Adversary in the Gospels. Similarly, those reviewers who thought they saw cinematic translations of paintings by Caravaggio (Denby) and Jackson Pollack (Gary Anderson in the *Washington Times*) missed in the long scene with Pilate Gibson's most obvious visual borrowing: the now classic suffering savior painted by Georges Rouault.

The day the film opened, Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie was in the audience in a sold-out theater in Times Square watching *The Passion of the Christ* unfold. Yoffie was deeply offended by what he saw as Jewish stereotypes. "The Jews in this film are evildoers," he later wrote to his colleagues on Reform Judaism's website. But he also noticed the woman next to him sobbing throughout the film, and gradually came to the conclusion that such Christians are responding out of deep belief and "really do not understand the charge of anti-Semitism and what Jews are talking about."

Yoffie's modest exercise in what literary types call "reader-response theory" is a useful way to survey the reactions of the nation's celebrity pundits. In *Vanity Fair*, everybody's favorite urban atheist, Christopher Hitchens, called Gibson a fascist and the movie an "exercise in lurid masochism." In the *New Republic*, Leon Wieseltier let loose with another of his contemptuous screeds against Christianity in general, medieval Catholicism more generically, and Gibson's "wretched hero" in particular. "A sacred snuff film" was his most inelegant shot. From the other side of the political aisle, columnists William Safire (*New York Times*) and Charles Krauthammer (*Washington Post*) found the movie sadistic as well as anti-Semitic. Indeed, "sadist," "masochistic," "pornographic," and their variants were the most common adjectives in the lava-laden commentaries published in the *Boston Globe*, *USA Today*, and *Slate*. Then there were the efforts to trivialize: A. O. Scott in the *New York Times* led his review

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with a Mel Gibson appearance on "The Simpsons," eventually getting around to comparing *The Passion* to "a slasher film," and Garry Wills in the *New York Review of Books* reported that he and his wife had to "keep from laughing" while watching the movie.

There were also many warnings from the critics that children watching the film would be traumatized. Never mind the fact that the movie is R-rated; adolescents who do make it into the theater will discover an "adult" film whose violence might actually be good for them. For sure, Gibson's film is brutal, as he promised it would be. Every biblical film is necessarily a new translation, and Gibson's visual vernacular is violence. On this score he risks much in his effort to do through violence what other directors have done by other, sometimes ideological, means—to jolt the viewer into a fresh understanding of an all-too-familiar story. Not all of his risks pay off. Critics are right to complain that the central scene of Christ's scourging goes on far too long, straining belief that any human being could survive such a brutal whipping and overwhelming the viewer's ability to empathize. Worse, the flashbacks to pre-passion moments in the life of Jesus fail to provide sufficient context for understanding why the Jewish religious establishment wanted to see Jesus put out of the way—a nearly fatal flaw in Gibson's conception.

Above all, Gibson misled both critics and supporters of his film by proclaiming his fidelity to Scripture. As *Beliefnet.com* demonstrated in its very alert analysis, for almost all of his excessive—and artistically unnecessary—additions to the biblical materials Gibson relied slavishly on one book dear to traditionalist Catholics: *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, written by Clemens Brentano in the early nineteenth century and purporting to be the mystical visions of an illiterate nun and stigmatic, Anne Catherine Emmerich. As Paula Fredriksen and others pointed out, many of the utterances attributed to Emmerich are indeed anti-Semitic, though none of these find their way into Gibson's film. What no one mentioned is that the Vatican halted Emmerich's canonization process in 1928 over concern that Brentano probably embellished her visions considerably. In other words, Gibson drew from a book that the Church considers dubious enough to exclude from material it will consider in her cause for sainthood.

Finally, what can one say about the dark warnings from Frank Rich and others that *The Passion* will surely inflame anti-Semitic violence in the Middle East, once it reaches theaters there? Well, there aren't many theaters left in Iraq, but knock-off DVDs of the film have been on sale there for more than a month at this writing and so far there has been no disturbance. Nor in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Bahrain, Qatar, or the United Arab Emirates, where the film was released uncensored, according to a report from Cairo by Charles Levinson in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 1.

It would be nice, but too much to expect, if Jews and Muslims as well as Christians could see *The Passion of the Christ* and recognize a larger theme: that like Jeremiah and Mohammed, prophets are rarely welcomed among religious establishments. Were I a Jew, I admit, this is one film I would skip. But as the nonviolent responses to *The Passion* so far demonstrate, this is a film that Jews should realize is not about them. It is about Jesus. As a creative interpretation of sacred texts rather than a straightforward reading of a scriptural story, it deserves to be treated with the respect we normally show to all sincere attempts to search out the fullness of God's intention. Sadly, such respect was shown by few critics of Gibson's *Passion*.

Kenneth L. Woodward is a Contributing Editor at Newsweek, *where he was Religion Editor for thirty-eight years.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Conciliating Hatred

Steven D. Smith

These days, if you announce that the Supreme Court is doing politics rather than law you will provoke more yawns than protests. But what sort of politics is the Court doing? Justice Antonin Scalia frequently charges the Court with stepping out of its judicial role and taking sides in the culture wars. That is eminently plausible. Still, we are admonished to have charity, and a more charitable interpretation is at least possible. Some of the Justices, including some who are most centrally placed on the Court, seem to have a very different self-understanding. They seem to see themselves as performing the political function of national conciliation.

In this more charitable interpretation, these Justices see themselves not as taking sides in the culture wars but rather as working to reconcile the warring factions. Things fall apart; the center (meaning the Court) must hold them together.

A theme of conciliation and inclusion was apparent, for instance, in Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's opinions almost as soon as she took her place on the Court. In *Lynch v. Donnelly* (1984), the first nativity scene case, O'Connor proposed that the establishment provision of the First Amendment should be construed to prohibit government from doing anything that would send a message either "endorsing" or "disapproving" religion. Although O'Connor herself seemed not to appreciate the fact, this was no modest proposal. Faithfully applied, the "no endorsement" prohibition would render unconstitutional such landmarks as the Declaration of Independence, Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, and, ironically, Jefferson's famous "Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom." It should come as no surprise, then, that the "no endorsement" doctrine was central to the Ninth Circuit's 2002 ruling in the *Newdow* case that the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance violate the Constitution. Such a potentially disruptive innovation cries out for justification. So it is noteworthy that O'Connor has not tried to justify the doctrine by arguing that it derives from the text of the First Amendment, or from the Framers' intentions, or even from the American constitutional tradition.

Her principal rationale, rather, has explicitly been in terms of current needs for conciliation and inclusion: messages of endorsement or disapproval of religion are impermissible because they cause some people to feel like outsiders or "lesser members of the political community." The "no endorsement" doctrine, which at least on its face prohibits both endorsement and disapproval, and hence purports to protect both believers and nonbelievers against offense, seeks to avoid such alienation and so to hold all citizens together in full political communion.

The Court's mediating role was even more explicitly articulated in the much-discussed joint opinion in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992). In previous cases, both Justice O'Connor and Justice Anthony Kennedy had openly doubted the constitutional foundations of *Roe v. Wade* (1973), which had constructed abortion rights according to an uncouth trimester framework that was palpably an attempt at political compromise. In fact, we have recently learned from private papers of the late Justice Harry Blackmun released to the public in March that Kennedy initially planned to vote in *Casey* to overturn *Roe*. But in the *Casey* joint opinion he eventually joined O'Connor and Justice David Souter in reaffirming Roe's "central holding"—with the expressed purpose, or at least the hope, of bringing

Steven D. Smith *is Warren Distinguished Professor of Law at the University of San Diego and the author of* Law's Quandary *(Harvard University Press, 2004).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the nation together on this "intensely divisive controversy." These Justices portrayed the Court's role as one of "call[ing] the contending sides of a national controversy to end their national division by accepting a common mandate rooted in the Constitution."

Like *Roe*, *Casey* was manifestly a compromise—a legal compromise and, at least for some Justices, a moral compromise as well. And the Justices compromised again last term in their decisions addressing another intensely divisive controversy—namely, affirmative action. There are well-developed ways to construe the Fourteenth Amendment so as to avoid invalidating affirmative action programs; the most common is to invoke distinctions between racial classifications that are "invidious" and those that are "benign" or "remedial." But these are distinctions fraught with difficulties, even with dangers, and in previous cases Justice O'Connor had shunned them. "The standard of review under the Equal Protection Clause is not dependent on the race of those burdened or benefited," she had insisted in *Adarand Constructors v. Pena* (1995). "[A]ll governmental actions based on race" must be subjected to "a most searching examination" and upheld only if necessary to serve a "compelling interest." But last term, in the face of widespread support for affirmative action by universities and also some major corporate executives and military officials, O'Connor again retreated in search of a middle ground.

So it now turns out that a "most searching examination" means something more like a studiously superficial examination. A public university still cannot be too brazen about using racial classifications in its admissions decisions: it cannot actually and formally assign a set numerical value to an applicant's race. But if the university can simply find a way to accomplish the same result in a slightly less obtrusive way—by, for example, treating race as an elastic "factor" in its admissions decisions—then the judicial reviewers will be satisfied. And a law school's desire to have a racially diverse student body can count as the "compelling interest" that justifies this marginally more muted but equally effective racial discrimination—at least so long as the school assures us that it will try to quit using race as a factor within something like twenty-five years. (So said O'Connor in her opinion for the majority in *Grutter*.)

Both supporters and critics of the affirmative action decisions (*Gratz* and *Grutter*) are naturally skeptical about whether there is more than a cosmetic difference between the sorts of programs that now are permissible and those that are not. They are also skeptical about whether in a future case the Court would find an interest of comparable magnitude "compelling" if the classification burdened racial minorities. Avoiding the disruption and violence that school desegregation often and predictably generated would seem to have been at least as "compelling" an interest as the University of Michigan's desire to have a diverse student body: hence the logic of the recent decisions might suggest that *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) should now come out the other way.

But this is a facetious suggestion. As you will learn to your chagrin if you have the misfortune of being required to teach these cases, the Court's affirmative action decisions were plainly not about logic—or even about law in any serious sense. They were political compromises calculated to placate the major interested parties, and to avoid the divisiveness that the Court feared would ensue if affirmative action were ended. The animating vision was a noble one. It was, wrote O'Connor, "the dream of one Nation, indivisible."

Conciliation is a laudable goal. It is at least akin to "dispute resolution," which historically has been the essential judicial function; so it is understandable that Justices might regard conciliation as a task fitting for the Court to undertake. In addition, conciliation sometimes involves painful compromise—even of basic principles, as such statesmen as Madison and Lincoln learned. Often we are willing to forgive, or even commend, otherwise unseemly compromises entered into for such admirable purposes.

So if the Justices are seeking to promote national conciliation, we may at least admire their motives. They mean well.

Whether the Supreme Court is qualified to serve as such a conciliator is a different question. The description in the *Casey* opinion of the Court as "call[ing] the contending sides of a national controversy to end their national division" struck some observers as grandiose, bordering on delusional. In this vein, Robert Nagel described the Justices' self-portrayal as "an outpouring of self-important romance," reminiscent of a "late-night fit of drunken sentimentality." Moreover, the leading precedent for this self-portrayal is ominous. In *Dred Scott v. Sanford* (1857), the Supreme Court similarly attempted to call the contending sides of a national controversy to end their national division: it attempted to settle the issue of slavery once and for all. Four years later the nation was engaged in a civil war that would wreak death and destruction on a horrifying scale.

Times and issues change, of course; the Court might be more successful in conciliation today. But many of the same constraints persist. Like it or not, the Court is still in some sense a court. It cannot just round up the interested parties and broker an acceptable political compromise; it must act, or at least pretend to act, like

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a law-interpreting institution. And this means that the Court must present its conciliating compromises as if they are derived in some plausible way, if not from the Constitution itself, then at least from prevailing constitutional doctrines. How to do this?

Legal justifications vary, obviously, depending among other things on whether the particular controversies to be conciliated are presented in cases litigated under the First Amendment, the Fourteenth Amendment, or some other provision of the Constitution. But underlying the surface differences in doctrine and vocabulary, a favored strategy seems to be emerging: we might call it the "evil-motives strategy." Asked to justify a law, program, or regulation, the government that sponsored it will predictably offer up some respectable-looking purpose or interest. If the Justices want to uphold the measure, they can simply accept that justification. But if they want to invalidate a divisive measure, they can find the stated purpose to be merely a cover for some more nefarious motive—for racial or religious bigotry, or "animus," or "a bare desire to harm a politically unpopular group" (quoting now from the 1996 decision in *Romer v. Evans*). In essence, the measure is struck down for being a product of hatred.

On their face, to be sure, most constitutional doctrines do not make evil motives the test of validity (though some do). The explicit vocabulary often is about the "balancing" of state and individual interests, or about the protection of "fundamental rights." But the Court has never even pretended to work out any methodology for actually balancing competing interests, which are, in truth, both unquantifiable and incommensurable. And "fundamental rights" not actually mentioned in the Constitution will always be controversial, and squishy. In the cases considering sodomy laws, for example, Justices and scholars clash over whether the right at stake is a right to engage in homosexual sodomy, a more general right of sexual freedom, or (as Justice Blackmun insisted) an amorphous "right to be let alone." And they argue about whether the right, whatever it is, comes under the rubric of "liberty," or "privacy," or "equality," or something else.

Students of constitutional law who must study these cases may applaud or deplore the various decisions in accordance with their own convictions and sympathies; but they quickly learn not to expect anything like a cogent explanation of why, say, a right to terminate a pregnancy is "fundamental," but a right to terminate one's own life is not. The plain fact is that, realistically speaking, judges have little or no competence to balance interests or, where the Constitution is silent, to give a plausible account of what are and what are not fundamental rights. It is doubtful whether social scientists or political philosophers could perform those tasks to anyone's satisfaction; and judges are in any case not social scientists or philosophers.

Determining and assessing motives, on the other hand, may seem like something more within the province of judges. Don't judges do that kind of thing all the time—in criminal cases, for example? Thus a focus on motivation has long been evident in racial discrimination cases, where discriminatory purpose is the main test of constitutionality, and also in religion cases. The Court has invalidated measures providing a "moment of silence" in public schools, as well as measures mandating the "balanced treatment" of evolution and creationism in a school's curriculum, because the Justices were sure that, behind the respectable purposes offered for these measures, there lay the sinister motive of establishing religion. And the Court struck down ordinances passed by the city of Hialeah restricting the ritual slaughter of animals by rejecting as mere pretexts the city's protestations that it was acting to prevent unwarranted cruelty to animals and to safeguard public health. (The animal carcasses were typically dumped on lawns or in public places.) The Justices ascertained, at least to their own satisfaction, that Hialeah was in reality acting on the evil motive of hostility to the Santeria religion.

In other contexts, the resort to an evil-motives jurisprudence is veiled but still discernible on close examination. Thus a generation ago the eminent constitutional scholars John Hart Ely and Cass Sunstein independently showed how a host of constitutional doctrines that do not explicitly make motivation the test of constitutionality are in fact devices for sniffing out illegitimate governmental purposes.

In recent years, the evil-motives device has been conspicuous in the Court's decisions dealing with homosexuality in the law. In *Romer*, the Court struck down Colorado's Amendment 2, which denied "protected status" in antidiscrimination laws to homosexuals. The cultural and political forces that led to the amendment's enactment were complex (see Robert F. Nagel, "Playing Defense in Colorado," FT May 1998). But the majority of the Court saw no complexity. Justice Kennedy's majority opinion described a black-and-white world in which supporters of the measure were acting simply from "animus," or from a "bare desire to harm a politically unpopular group." And last term, in *Lawrence v. Texas*, Kennedy again wrote for the Court to declare that a Texas law prohibiting homosexual sodomy was like Amendment 2 in being "born of animosity toward the class of persons affected." Concurring, Justice O'Connor insist-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ed that by prohibiting homosexual conduct the state had acted to "brand all homosexuals as criminals."

The evil-motives strategy in modern constitutional decisions is the product of legal discourse and doctrine. But the Court might also have embraced the same strategy under the influence of contemporary moral reasoning.

As powerfully diagnosed in Alasdair MacIntyre's classic *After Virtue*, modern moral reasoning is in disarray. There is no shared moral framework or vocabulary, MacIntyre showed, with which people today can reason together to arrive at cogent conclusions on moral issues. The discord does not reflect any paucity of moral theories. On the contrary, theories and arguments abound. Many of the leading approaches are commonly grouped into competing camps of deontologists and Kantians on the one hand and consequentialists or utilitarians on the other. But there is often wide divergence within these camps; and each camp also makes telling criticisms against the other. In addition, many moral views reflect perspectives—in particular, perspectives grounded in religious beliefs—that do not fit comfortably into either the Kantian or utilitarian camps. As a consequence of this unruly state of affairs, most forms of moral argument will seem to some constituencies wrong from the start—that is, grounded from the outset in unacceptable moral premises.

Even so, there is at least one proposition on which virtually everyone might be expected to converge. Nearly everyone can agree, that is, that it is morally wrong to act on the basis of hatred.

Kantians can readily accept the proposition. If moral reflection is rooted in the assumption that the only thing that is good without qualification is a "good will," as Kant maintained, then a will animated by hatred seems just the opposite: it is almost the embodiment of moral evil. And a hateful action obviously flunks the test of Kant's famous categorical imperative, which holds that we should act only on maxims that we can consistently will to be universal laws, laws followed by everyone. Kant explained that even harmless selfishness is condemned by this test, since we might sometimes need the help of others but by a maxim of selfishness would deprive ourselves of that benefit. Surely this conclusion would apply *a fortiori* to actions done from, to borrow the Supreme Court's phrase, "a bare desire to harm."

For consequentialists it should be only slightly more difficult to condemn actions done from hatred. It is true that if people get satisfaction from acting hatefully, a conscientious utilitarian presumably should count that satisfaction as a prima facie good, so far as it goes. Strict utilitarians do occasionally worry about hypothetical situations in which the pleasure experienced by sadistic torturers exceeds the pain felt by the victims. As a practical matter, though, it is easy to conclude that in the real world, actions done from love or at least from enlightened self-interest are likely to produce more net satisfaction than actions done from hatred.

If we consider the matter from a religious perspective, the answer again seems clear. Christian teaching famously exhorts us to love, not hate; we are to love even our enemies, to pray for those who despitefully use us. Other religions by and large affirm this essential admonition against hating, even if a religious thinker occasionally suggests that hatred may be appropriate as a response to extraordinary instances of deliberate, egregious malevolence.

In short, even in the midst of a chaos of moral perspectives, virtually everyone will agree that it is wrong to act on the basis of hatred. Consequently, it is utterly predictable that advocates would seek to defend their moral judgments against those who do not share them by attributing their opposition to hatred. There is ample cause to worry about a cultural climate in which ascriptions of hatred become a main staple of moral discourse. But in our modern situation, this may well be the only kind of argument that is compatible with virtually everyone's moral premises.

So it is readily understandable that the Supreme Court would adopt the evil-motives strategy as its preferred mode of justification for striking down measures of which it disapproves. But how does this strategy comport with the apparent desire of at least some Justices to act as national conciliator—to be the center that holds things together?

It seems evident that the Court's technique is not well calculated to promote mutual understanding. Let's look first at its effect on the losing litigants is such cases. With its evil-motives discourse, the Court makes it clear to citizens who support an invalidated measure—such as the Colorado Amendment 2 struck down in *Romer*—not only that they have lost but also that they have masked and misrepresented their real motive, which, as the Court has discovered, is hatred.

The expressed moral convictions and prudential concerns of these citizens are thus disparaged without any serious engagement or attempt at genuine understanding. Such understanding might jeopardize the ascription of merely hateful motives. It would be inconvenient, after all, to have to acknowledge that the people disfavored by a judicial decision are not actually as bad as the Court for its beneficial purposes needs them to be.

The parties that prevail in such litigation will presumably be happier with the Court's explanation. But they will not thereby be induced to hold a more empa-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thetic or magnanimous opinion of their adversaries. On the contrary, the human tendency to ascribe evil motives to those we oppose will be, for the prevailing parties, officially confirmed and rewarded.

More generally, the Court's approach not only countenances but indeed mandates a discourse of demonization in which adversaries are required to litigate their differences by asserting and withstanding ascriptions of bigotry, intolerance, hatred, and "animus." In traditional logic and rhetoric, the so-called ad hominem argument is typically treated as a certifiable fallacy. But if evil motives become the test of constitutionality, then disputants are not merely authorized but indeed required to trade in just that sort of argument. Robert Nagel notes that a good deal of modern constitutional jurisprudence amounts to little more than thinly veiled exercises in name-calling, as the Justices peremptorily dismiss the positions they disfavor as products of "prejudice," "fear," "antipathy," "irrationality," or "a bare . . . desire to harm a politically unpopular group." "[T]o a remarkable extent," Nagel observes, "our courts have become places where the name-calling and exaggeration that mark the lower depths of our political debate are simply given a more acceptable, authoritative form."

Ironies arise. A central purpose of much modern constitutional jurisprudence has been to resist and root out demeaning "stereotypes." Though problematic in various respects, this effort to eliminate stereotypes seems nicely compatible with the purpose of conciliation that animates many of the Court's decisions. Stereotypes, after all, flatten and alienate and depersonalize; they thereby operate to block their victims from participating in the community as full human persons. Yet the jurisprudence of evil motives works precisely by trading in the most flagrant and demeaning of stereotypes. Blinding itself and those who join in the Court's rhetoric to the complexities of human affairs and to the intricate interplay of concerns and moral judgments that manifest themselves in a measure such as Amendment 2, the jurisprudence of evil motives reduces large constituencies to the simple categories of homophobes, or racists, or sexists.

Yet perhaps the most damaging aspect of the Court's modern jurisprudence is that it upsets the delicate balance between the ennobling and destructive aspects of our moral aspirations. These aspirations are ennobling in that they remind us that we are not mere pursuers of self-gratification but rather creatures with moral obligations and commitments, which is surely one of the primary foundations of claims to human dignity. Yet moral convictions can also be a source of destruction and degradation, in at least two distinct ways. First, in a pluralistic community, moral convictions diverge, and they can thereby produce division, even violent conflict. Second, as humans we routinely fall short of our own moral commitments, thus incurring criticism and condemnation, both from others and ourselves. Such condemnation can lead to loathing, self-loathing, and despair.

Probably the principal device for reconciling these aspects of our moral nature consists of the venerable admonition to "hate the sin but love the sinner." At least up to a point, I can deplore what you do but still rejoice in your existence, recognizing that you are a valuable human being; indeed, I can recognize that you are valuable in part because you have moral commitments, even if I disagree with them. And I can deplore what *I* do and yet resist despair, recognizing that for all my manifold deficiencies I am still a valuable human being possessed of worth and dignity.

Of course, we routinely fall short of living up to this moral ideal (as to many others). The principle nonetheless works to mediate between our ennobling moral commitments and our destructive moral conflicts and derelictions.

Tragically, the Supreme Court's evil-motives jurisprudence attempts to negate that principle, or to foreclose any resort to it. Moral disapproval of conduct, such as homosexual acts, is equated with hostility toward and hatred of persons who engage in that conduct, and even of persons with a proclivity to engage in it, whether they actually do so or not.

This equation is nowhere clearer than in Justice O'Connor's concurring opinion in *Lawrence v. Texas*. Moral disapproval of conduct, O'Connor there maintains, amounts to moral disapproval of the class or group with which that conduct is "closely correlated." And "[m]oral disapproval of this group" is in turn tantamount for legal purposes to "a bare desire to harm the group." Consequently, by criminalizing homosexual conduct, Texas acted from the legal equivalent of a bare desire to harm.

Texas protested that it had done no such thing; it had merely declared certain conduct to be against the law, as a state does with every single criminal prohibition it enacts. But O'Connor would have none of this: condemning the conduct was equivalent, she insisted, to condemning the class of people who might be inclined to engage in such conduct.

Under the weight of these morality-flattening equivalences, any possibility of hating the sin but loving the sinner is crushed. On the contrary, disapproval of what you regard as sin amounts to (and indeed is simply the expression of) hatred of the sinners.

In such Supreme Court opinion-making, the implic-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it causal sequence is curious, to say the least. Suppose that, as a fallible and fallen human being, I do not succeed in hating the sin but loving the sinner. I hate both. I shouldn't, but that's the way I am. Even so, what is the more plausible causal account? Do I start by disapproving of some action as sinful, and then lapse into hating the actor? Or do I begin by hating the person and then project my hatred onto some action that this person performs?

The evil-motives account of my position would seem to presuppose the latter: my ostensible moral disapproval of conduct is declared illegitimate because it is in reality merely a manifestation of hatred toward persons who engage in that conduct. But surely this is a peculiar view. Even supposing that I am basically just a hateful sort of person, why would I pick out (from among all the potential candidates) some particular class of people to hate, unless I already had some objection to the conduct in terms of which that class is defined?

Going further, wasn't Justice O'Connor herself plainly indicating disapproval, both legal and moral, of the beliefs and actions of that class of Texas citizens and officials who had supported the sodomy statute? Using her own reasoning, are we thus forced to infer that Justice O'Connor was simply hostile to that class of people, or that she was acting from a bare desire to harm them? Should we likewise infer that in *Romer* Justices Kennedy and O'Connor were driven by animus toward the more than eight hundred thousand citizens of Colorado who voted Amendment 2 into law?

These demeaning inferences admittedly offend logic and human experience, not to mention charity—but no more so than the logic-impaired and experience-impervious ad hominem assertions tossed about by Supreme Court Justices in their *Romer* and *Lawrence* opinions.

The culture wars are no negligible concern. We have learned from recent history that even nations that appear to be powerful, stable, and civilized can quickly collapse into paralyzing strife and even destructive anarchy. The prospect is unsettling. So while we may rightly doubt the propriety of the Supreme Court's conception of itself as national conciliator, we may nonetheless admire the motives of Justices who want to reduce conflict and hold the nation together.

Unfortunately, in our current legal and moral climate, the effort by Justices to act as mediators pushes them to adopt tactics that are likely to aggravate the very problem they seek to address. If the nation's divisions are to be healed, the healing will not come about by life-tenured officials issuing indictments that accuse millions of their fellow-citizens of animus, prejudice, hostility, or hatred. FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What It's Like To Be a Christian

Peter Simpson

Truths are one thing, the way they are set forth is another. These words express what many have judged, for good or ill, to be the particular spirit of the Second Vatican Council. The words come, in fact, from the Council itself, from John XXIII to be precise. They are found in his opening allocution to the Council Fathers, in which he commended to the Fathers the task of penetrating and expounding the doctrine of the Church in the manner the times require, and it is in the process of saying this that he makes his distinction between *truths* and *ways*:

> For the deposit itself of Faith, or the truths which are contained in our venerable doctrine, is one thing, and the way (*modus*) in which the same are set forth, with however the same sense and the same meaning, is another.

The Pope is thus speaking specifically of the doctrines of the faith. Moreover, it is very clear that he had no intention of sanctioning *modi* or ways of setting forth these truths that change their sense or meaning. What sort of thing, then, did he have in mind? Was he talking about a difference in the vocabulary to be used—asking for some variation of homiletic rhetoric, such as the change from "thee" and "thine" to "you" and "yours" in English? Was his famous *aggiornamento* just a matter of updating words? Hardly. An ecumenical council would not have been needed for that. On the other hand, if his desire was to change more than words, or to change them in some significant and deeper way, it is hard to see how he could have avoided changes in the sense and meaning of the doctrines set forth. The Pope might seem to be caught, therefore, between the Scylla of triviality and the Charybdis of heresy. Pope John himself presumably knew what he had in mind, though few others seem to have been able to work out what it was. During the forty years since the Council, the Church has been torn between the liberals on the one side, who so wanted to change the *modus* that they also changed the doctrine, and the conservatives on the other side, who so wanted to keep the doctrine that they also kept the *modus*.

John XXIII did not live to see this development. He died during the Council's first year. It was left to his successor, Paul VI, to weather the storm that began to crash against the Church almost before the Council ended. I am not sure that he solved Pope John's conundrum, but he did have the signal merit of refusing to dismiss it. In fact, he embraced it, affirming, against both liberal and conservative pressure, both parts of it. Without his rock-like steadfastness, his stubborn refusal in his pontifical utterances to be moved either to this extreme or to that, the Church might have given up on John's conundrum. That would have been a pity; worse, it would have been an error. Or so I contend. For though the conundrum can be interpreted in a variety of ways, there is one particular way of interpreting it that, as one looks back, can be seen as pointing straight to the teaching of John Paul II.

PETER SIMPSON *is Professor of Philosophy at the City University of New York and author of* On Karol Wojtyla *(Wadsworth, 2001).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The burden of John Paul's teaching has often and well been described as personalism. Karol Wojtyla came to the papacy not merely as a bishop but as a professor of philosophy who had been writing about and teaching personalism in Poland long before the Second Vatican Council began. Moreover, as bishop of Krakow, he was himself present at the Council and must have heard with his own ears John XXIII propounding his conundrum. We don't know what he specifically thought of it, but we know a great deal about what he thought of the Council in general, for he devoted a kind of guidebook to it, for the instruction and practice of his diocese of Krakow (The English translation is *Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of Vatican II*). The book was published in 1972 and so was being written, and being read, during some of the stormiest years of the post-conciliar period. Nevertheless, it exudes a confidence of thought and an optimism of faith that, for the time, appear astonishing. Here is a man who is so sure of his understanding of the "mystery" of the Council and of the capacity of his flock to understand it along with him that he is actively engaged in "initiating" them into it. One wonders how many other bishops of the day could have thought or done the same.

The words are as striking as the facts they record. To be *initiated* into a *mystery* conjures up, not the learning of a creed or the systematizing of a doctrine, but the revealing of an experience. As Karol Wojtyla himself put it, the concern of the Church's pastors gathered in council was not so much

> to answer questions like "What should men believe?", "What is the real meaning of this or that truth of faith?" and so on, but rather to answer the more complex question: "What does it mean to be a believer, a Catholic, and a member of the Church?"

This question is difficult and complex because

> it not only presupposes the truth of faith and pure doctrine, but also calls for that truth to be situated in the human consciousness and calls for a definition of the attitude, or rather the many attitudes, that go to make the individual a believing member of the Church.

This sounds much like the words of John XXIII when he said that his calling of the Council was necessary, not to express the Church's doctrine (Trent and Vatican I, he pointedly remarked, had sufficiently done that), but "so that minds might be more fully imbued and formed" by that doctrine. We might even go so far as to suggest that "consciousness" is Karol Wojtyla's gloss on Pope John's "imbued" and that "attitude" is his gloss on "formed." But what precisely do these glosses really mean? What is Wojtyla getting at by "consciousness" and "attitude," or by the question "What does it mean to be a believing member of the Church?"

At this point I wish to call upon the assistance of a rather unlikely character—unlikely in this context at any rate—namely New York University professor Thomas Nagel. I do so because he is a noted Anglo-American philosopher with a knack for putting things in straightforward ways. Thanks to him, Anglo-American philosophers are all now familiar with the puzzling question, "What is it like to be a bat?" This question formed the title and topic of a famous and much-anthologized article of Nagel's, and my claim is that Wojtyla understands the Council to have asked and answered the question, "What is it like to be a Christian?" Now, as Nagel argues, this is not the sort of question that you can answer by looking at a few examples (bats for Nagel, Christians for us) and pointing and saying, "Well, being a bat (or a Christian) is like *this*." On the contrary, this sort of question can only be answered from the inside, as it were. You have to get inside the mind of a Christian, or a bat, to understand, or better to become acquainted with, what it is like to be one. Nagel's immediate point in his article was negative, that while such getting inside is necessary for answering the "What is it like?" question, we cannot achieve this getting inside—at least not inside bats, and perhaps not inside other people, either. Consequently we cannot answer the question. Still—and this is the point from Nagel I wish to insist on—we cannot deny the question's applicability; we cannot deny that there really is something that it is like to be a bat (or any other thing possessed of awareness); we cannot deny that bats really do have an inside, a state of experienced consciousness that is the what-it-is-like-to-be that thing.

Whatever Wojtyla might think about getting inside bats, he is not at all skeptical about getting inside Christians. This is in large part because there is at least one human being whom each of us can get inside of, namely ourselves. Consequently, if we are Christians, there is one Christian we can get inside of, too. For each of us is, precisely, an *inside*. We may not focus on this much, we may not bring it to explicit awareness, and we may not seek to set it out in a comprehensive theory; but we are always living it. Moreover, there are times when our inside comes very much to the fore, often despite ourselves, as when we are depressed or in anguish. Then our inside comes so much to the fore that it wholly absorbs the outside, too, and everything

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

around us takes on the sadness and grief that we are living inside. The same happens, of course, though in the opposite direction, when we are extremely happy or in states of supreme joy. But what thus forces itself on us in extreme moments is actually present at every moment, though we seldom notice it or, indeed, have need of noticing it.

Now it is the philosopher's habit, as it is also his job, to make explicit and to thematize what otherwise we take all too much for granted. So Wojtyla, as a philosopher and a theologian, takes upon himself, in his guidebook to the Council, the task of thematizing the inside of being a Christian. Or rather he takes upon himself the task of showing how the Council thematized it. For his book is replete with long quotations from the Council followed by his own comments and elaborations. Therein, indeed, lies much of the book's puzzling character. For often the quotations and the comments seem worlds apart: the quotations look like traditional repetitions of traditional doctrine while Wojtyla's comments look like bizarre tangents. For instance, he begins the book by quoting the following passage from the Council: "Thus, as the centuries go by, the Church is always advancing towards the plenitude of divine truth, until eventually the words of God are fulfilled in her."

And yet he says immediately prior to this, and enlarges on it at length immediately afterwards, that the Council is really talking about the "enrichment of faith," that concern with such enrichment expresses the "reality" and "essential aspect" of the Council, and that what this itself means is the "situating of truth" in the "consciousness and attitudes" of the believer, or that it means enrichment in the "subjective, human, existential sense."

I defy anyone to get that meaning out of the quotation, or rather I defy anyone to get that meaning out of it who does not read the Council more according to a certain spirit than according to the letter. The "spirit" of the Council has become something of a dirty word among conservatives, and something of a license for doctrinal free-for-all among liberals. Wojtyla does not actually use the word himself, but if he did he would mean it in neither sense. Rather he would mean it in John XXIII's sense of finding a new *modus* to set forth old truths.

To clarify let me return to Nagel's "what is it like?" question. To start with the obvious, there would be no sense in your asking "what is it like to be a bat?" if it wasn't a bat but an elephant that you were asking about. To put an elephant in front of you, to ask what it is like to be that thing, and then to conclude, once you had come up with some sort of answer, that you had now understood what it is like to be a bat—this could only be the behavior of a madman or perhaps of a philosopher wishing to prove a point. You have to start with a bat if you want to know what it is like to be a bat. So also with Christians. If you want to know what it is like to be a Christian—if, moreover, you want to initiate your flock into this knowledge—you have to start with a Christian. What, then, is a Christian? Precisely someone formed by the doctrines, the traditional doctrines, of the Church. Without the traditional doctrines, you may, to be sure, end up with something very interesting, but you will not end up with a Christian. This, I take it, is a matter of definition. For though some might want to say that a Christian should really be something else or should adopt different doctrines, they can hardly deny—indeed their desire for change requires them to assert—that the traditional doctrines are what defines a Christian. That is why they want to change the doctrines: because they want to change what it is, or has been, to be a Christian.

Hence if Wojtyla is going to ask and answer seriously the question of what it is like to be a Christian, he has to start off with the traditional doctrines; he has to start off with pure, uncompromising orthodoxy. In other words, orthodoxy—I mean orthodoxy in all its time-honored formulations and definitions—is so far from being threatened by Wojtyla's project that it is the condition for the very possibility of that project. Take orthodoxy away and the whole thing ceases to make sense. But note, at the same time, that Wojtyla's project does not seek merely to repeat the time-honored formulations. Rather, it explores Christian doctrine from the point of view of what doctrine does, or should do, to the Christian who believes it, and it explores this, moreover, from the *inside*. This is Wojtyla's new *modus* with which he is going to set forth old truths.

Now if we consider the question of what it is like to be a believer, and if we mean by a believer someone fully formed by orthodoxy, we have to admit that there are very few believers out there. Most believers are imperfect in one way or another. Perhaps we do not actually deny with our lips anything that the Church teaches, but we certainly deny it often enough with our lives. Consequently, we should not so much say that Wojtyla's question is "What is it like to be a believer?" as that it is "What *ought* it to be like to be a believer?" In fact, that is his question. It was I who, in the footsteps of Nagel, put it in the first way. What Wojtyla actually asked was, "What does it *mean* to be a believer?" The clear implication is that his interest is in what it would be like to be a real believer who lives out his belief to the full. That is why his book is about initiating his diocese into the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mystery, or about enriching its faith. That is why he keeps on repeating the doctrines, and from so many angles, and in so many different ways. "These are the truths we all know and have known since childhood catechism," he says in effect, "but see what it means really to believe them; see what sort of person they should be fashioning us into, and fashioning us into from the inside; see what spiritual reality we should be expressing in our inner person and living out in our daily lives."

This focus of Wojtyla's project, this new *modus* of presenting traditional doctrine, helps to explain much of the peculiarity of his writing style. In fact it helps to explain much of the writing style of Vatican II as well. For the documents of both are notoriously long-winded and diffuse. If you read them as you would a scholastic textbook, trying to trace out neat divisions and subdivisions, exact syllogisms and distinctions, you will quickly lose the thread and indeed the point.

Try instead to read them for their overall impression and effect, in the way you would read, say, a stream-of-consciousness novel or a psychological casebook—save that the consciousness and the psychology are ideals to follow, not malaises to diagnose. Try to read them as speaking primarily to the imaginative and active energies and only secondarily to the intellective ones. In particular do this with respect to what Wojtyla says when he quotes the Council's remark that "the Church is always advancing towards the plenitude of divine truth," and then interprets this to be about situating the truth in human consciousness and attitudes, and to be calling for an enrichment of faith in the subjective and existential sense. For contrary to initial impressions, this interpretation now turns out to be plain fact. If our focus is to be on the "what is it like?" question, what else can it be like to be a believer "advancing towards the plenitude of divine truth" than to have these truths "situated" in one's "consciousness and attitudes" and thereby to be enriched "subjectively and existentially"?

Wojtyla's *modus* is what is meant by his personalism, and, as such, it was a *modus* he had been following almost all his adult life. Certainly it long preceded Vatican II. It also preceded his theology, at least in logic, if not in time. Wojtyla's personalism comes from his phenomenology, his adaptation of the philosophy of Edmund Husserl. Phenomenology may be said to be a systematic attempt to found all of one's knowledge on the "what is it like?" question. Before one can say what any given thing is, one must become directly acquainted with it, and with it as it really is, not as one would like it to be or as others wish it to be or as some school has said it must be. This is the burden of Husserl's slogan: "Back to the things themselves." Now, expressed in this way, the method of phenomenology would seem to be nothing more than plain common sense and what many philosophers have pursued in the past. But Husserl's phenomenology has its own twist. It begins as a sort of turn inward to self-consciousness. The things he wants us to go back to are things as they are manifest to the self.

The turn inward is, in modern philosophy, very much a legacy of Descartes. Previous philosophers had, of course, never denied the reality of the subjective world. How could they? It is and has always been a feature of everyone's lived experience. But they had not focused on it or brought it to thematic expression. They had concentrated rather on the external world in its externality and had passed over, or taken for granted, the modalities it formed in subjective consciousness. The external world was, after all, exciting and perplexing enough to satisfy any philosopher's contemplative desires. Even Descartes' turn to the subjective was driven by and for the sake of his desire to understand the external world. He wanted to understand it wholly in terms of mathematics but, in order to do so, he had to rid it of the nonmathematical aspects present everywhere in daily experience. Since he could not deny that these aspects were part of experience, he had to deny instead that they were part of our experience of external things. So he was more or less forced to locate them in the internal or subjective self and, in the process of elaborating on this, he found himself, unlike his predecessors, making an express theme of self-consciousness.

Once thematized sufficiently for his purposes, however, the topic was quickly abandoned by Descartes. For his successors, by contrast, it soon became an all-consuming passion. Modern philosophy has, as a result, been above all the philosophy of consciousness, the philosophy of the self. There is clearly nothing in principle wrong with this sort of philosophy. It is even necessary, not to say vital, for the fullness of human understanding. Still, like any philosophy, it has its dangers, the chief of which is subjectivism—the view, which soon became prevalent, that there is nothing but subjective consciousness and that the world is but a construction or projection of the self. Phenomenology, at least in its first practitioners and its early stages, was conceived as a conscious rejection of subjectivism and an attempt to recover, without abandoning inwardness, the experienced reality of external things and of the self as well.

This is the phenomenology, particularly as practiced by Max Scheler, of which Wojtyla became a student, and which would in time lead him into novel, but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

orthodox, expositions of sexual ethics (*Love and Responsibility*), and into even more novel, though no less orthodox, expositions of the human person as the self-possessed locus of action and thought (*The Acting Person*). Both of these works may be seen as answers to "What is it like?" questions, the first to the question "What is it like to be a sexual person?" and the second to the question "What is it like to be a person simply?" In both, Wojtyla broke new ground, not by propounding new things, but by propounding old things in a new way, a new *modus*, the inwardly focused *modus* of phenomenological personalism.

Take, for instance, the terms "consciousness" and "attitude" that Wojtyla introduces in his 1972 guidebook to Vatican II. The former term he uses as a way to thematize faith, and the latter as a way to thematize the natural fruition of faith in action. About faith he says that it is "a conscious response to the God who reveals Himself," that it engages "man's whole personal structure and spiritual dynamism." Faith does, to be sure, have an objective content in the form of the truths that God has revealed, so there have to be dogmas and there has to be a teaching authority. But that is not Wojtyla's focus. His focus is on the kind of response man makes to God; on the *subject*, not the *object*, of belief. "Man's response to God consists in self-abandonment to God. This is the true dimension of faith, in which man does not simply accept a particular set of propositions, but accepts his own vocation." About attitudes Wojtyla writes that they are a kind of "taking up a position" or "a being ready to act" in accordance with faith. Essential to faith is "an attitude of self-commitment to God—a continual readiness to perform the fundamental 'action' which corresponds to the reality of revelation." The action in question is that of bearing witness to God in all of one's life and behavior and in all the complex variety of acts and attitudes that this involves. Strengthening the "conscious attitude" that is faith and thereby enabling all believers to carry out the fundamental action of faith is, says Wojtyla, what Vatican II was about.

Central to this strengthening of the faith, and what makes Wojtyla's thought *personalism*, is the focus on the self. In the above quotations, for instance, Wojtyla speaks of "self-abandonment" and "self-commitment," and these terms do not refer just to the self but much more to the *freedom* of the self. We are as we are, or we become what we become, through the way we fashion ourselves in our own acts of self-determination. There is nothing new about this theme, of course, nor is there meant to be. What is new is how this theme is brought to view. For what the turn to consciousness helps more fully to disclose, and even to revivify for us, is the extent to which the experience of freedom is the experience of being undetermined in our choices by anything extrinsic to choice itself. We do, to be sure, choose something when we choose; but it is *we* who choose it, and not it that chooses us. This is an experienced fact and cannot, without dishonesty or self-deception, be denied. On the contrary, it must, like any fact of consciousness, be given full phenomenological attention.

In the experience of self-determination we find, or re-find, the peculiar dignity of the individual, which, as an experienced phenomenon, is best expressed by speaking of the self-consciousness of the "I" rather than of "man" or even of "this particular man." For to speak of "I" brings to the fore, as speaking of "man" does not, both the uniqueness and the free self-determination of the individual. The individual "I" is not interchangeable with, nor is it the possession of, any other "I." This is manifest not only in the experience we have of "I" but also and as powerfully in the experience we have of "you." The experience of "you" is also an experience of unique self-determination, the unique self-determination that is you. There is something inviolable about both you and me in this experience. I can try to persuade you to choose this rather than that, but I cannot perform your act of choice for you; nor can you perform my act of choice for me. I can, of course, trick you into a choice by false promises, or intimidate you into it by threats; I can even apply physical force if you do not do as I wish, and imprison, maim, or kill you. But I cannot do any of this without the experience at the same time of violating you, of invading your uniqueness and, so far as I can, taking it away. Moreover, I cannot experience the same invasion at your hands without the experience of being violated by you in my turn. At least I cannot do or experience any of this as long as I experience you as you and me as me. I can only do it if I somehow suppress the experience of you and, indeed, of me, and do violence in myself to myself.

It is this experience of self-determination and uniqueness in myself and in you, and the accompanying experience of violation if this uniqueness is assaulted, that Karol Wojtyla has so powerfully used in order to preach human dignity and, so far as he can, to restore human dignity in the modern world. It is the theme of his phenomenological personalism, and from it springs all his thinking, both philosophical and theological. From it also springs his radical challenge to the Church and the world. This challenge is finally no different from the traditional Christian challenge of love and holiness taught through the centuries. The difference in Wojtyla's case is that this challenge is accessed from the inside, from the lived consciousness of "I." That is why

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Wojtyla expresses the challenge in terms of a "situating" in the self of the timeless truths of the faith through thoroughly formed "consciousness and attitudes." Wojtyla's personalism is an articulation for *inward* experience of what sound morality and religion have always *outwardly* taught. Indeed, it is through the inward appropriation of the outward teachings that Wojtyla has been able to give such rich expression to personalism in his writings. It is through the same appropriation that he has articulated for the Church, and not only for the Church, a new *modus* of setting forth old truths.

To articulate something, whether new or old, is necessarily to objectify it, to reduce it to words intelligible to reflective consciousness. It is to pass from immediate acquaintance with a thing to the mediated expression of it in propositions. To do phenomenological personalism, therefore, is to engage in the objectifying of the subjective. There is nothing paradoxical about this. Once anything has been given to us in experience we can at once turn around and reflect upon it, thematize it, and give verbal expression to it. As Wojtyla himself has put it in *Person and Community*,

> Today more than ever before we feel the need—and also see a greater possibility—of objectifying the problem of the subjectivity of the human being. . . . [W]e can no longer go on treating the human being exclusively as an objective being, but we must also somehow treat the human being as a subject in the dimension in which the specifically human subjectivity of the human being is determined by consciousness.

To objectify the problem of human subjectivity is to give an explicit place in our science of man to that experience of man which everyone has always had but which few, until recently, have brought to fully philosophic reflection. It is not easy to do this correctly. It is not easy to express the subjective: what we all readily experience we cannot all readily describe. Thus, phenomenological personalism is an ongoing and unfinished task. But it is a peculiarly modern task, a task for the thinkers of our time, and Wojtyla is a striking exemplar of what the task is and what can be achieved when one devotes oneself to it. Moreover, he has been called upon to undertake this task in view of all, on the world stage, and to undertake it in his life and deeds as well as in his writings. He has been called upon, I think, to be for us all a living embodiment of John XXIII's conundrum, and thus an embodiment of the spirit, the true spirit, of Vatican II. FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fear of Redemption

R. R. Reno

Yesterday a friend came over and collapsed on my couch. He sighed and said, "I'm maxed out." I think we all sometimes feel this sense of exhausted over-extension. We try to keep up with work, with friends, with family, with community obligations. We feel ourselves stretched across long commutes, across professional expectations, across the all-too-fragile bonds of marriage and responsibility. Our resources, our dedication, our energy, our time are elastic, but not infinite. As we stretch we worry that we will break.

When I conjure in my mind the objections that people I know make to Christianity, I am reminded of my friend on the couch, enervated by life's manifold demands. Most of these people are not confident rationalists dismissing the supernatural or wanton hedonists rejecting moral constraint; they are not dogmatic about the universe being purely material, and most want to live according to some moral code. Their real objections have to do with stretching and the fear of breaking. Faced with the Sermon on the Mount, they collapse on the couch, as it were, and protest that the degree of demand is just too much. Christianity promises new life in Christ, and our reaction is to shrink from the prospect. We think of our present lives, and we cannot imagine enduring the long commute. We hear St. Paul's appeal—"present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God"—and we worry that we lack the inner resources to stretch so far. We fear breaking across the difference.

It is important to understand this fear, for it is at the core of a great deal of contemporary American culture. The threatening force of moral demand haunts the modern and postmodern soul. When we talk about respecting the unique individuality of each and every person, we are signaling a desire to permit and encourage self-possession. Instead of forcing individuals to stretch toward generic norms and expectations, we want to create a social environment in which moral ambition can be tailor-made. None will break across alien demands. We can endure if we carefully adjust moral demands to our unique abilities and special circumstances.

Christianity teaches otherwise. In *The Divine Comedy*, Dante describes the exit from the seventh and final ledge of purgatory as a wall of fire. In the poem, Virgil passes through, but Dante hesitates, overcome with fear. The voice of Virgil reassures him. "My son, there may be torment, but not death." According to the promise of the Gospels, death has been swallowed up by life. What is alien can be inhabited. We can make the long commute from sinner to saint. Such is the reassurance that Dante portrays in Virgil's encouraging words. That confidence turns on the way in which Christianity understands atonement.

We tend to think that the modern project is dominated by ambition. If we will but break the shackles of dogma, we are told, then the true potential of the human mind will burst forth. Progress, the great watchword of modernity, is the promised fruit of freedom. Ambition is certainly present, but greatly influential modern figures such as Rousseau and Emerson were also concerned about the spiritual exhaustion that comes from fruitless efforts to meet unrealistic and inhumane demands. They focused their criticisms of traditional morality upon the socially constructed project of inducing men and women

R. R. Reno *teaches theology at Creighton University and is the author of* In the Ruins of the Church: Sustaining Faith in an Age of Diminished Christianity *(Brazos, 2002).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

into adopting social roles unconnected to their true natures. Both sought to give men and women breathing room to be themselves.

Rousseau's *First* and *Second Discourses* emphasize the ways in which prevailing social mores alienate human beings and corrupt the intrinsic dignity of each person. Our healthy instinct of self-regard, our basic loyalty to our own identities as persons, which Rousseau calls *amour de soi*, is transmuted into a competitive comparison of ourselves with others, *amour-propre*. As a result of this shift, we bend and distort ourselves so that we can fit into prevailing social categories and succeed according to dominant social norms. We become calculating social animals rather than spontaneous, free human beings. We disperse ourselves into our many social roles, and as a consequence, we are not linked to our true selves. Not surprisingly, then, Rousseau wishes us to throw off the shackles of social expectation and live according to the inner truth of our own natures. As the freethinking Savoyard Vicar proclaims in *Émile*, "I long for the moment when, delivered from the chains of the body, I will be myself without contradiction, without division, and I will only have need of myself to be happy." Fulfillment comes when everything that defines our lives grows out of our individuality.

Emerson, a century later, does not follow Rousseau's specific theories of the origins of social alienation, but he joins in Rousseau's broad condemnation of the dehumanizing effects of social conformity. The crucial similarity between the two is a common judgment that the disciplinary structures of social life force changes upon the individual that create a discontinuity between one's true self and one's social self. When Emerson says, "Imitation is suicide," he is drawing attention to the spiritual death that stems from self-alienation. When we stretch ourselves to meet the standards and goals set by others, we risk waking up one morning drowning in the responsibilities of marriage, children, job, and mortgage, feeling as though we have lost touch with all the passions and desires that once animated and moved us. An empty life is the antithesis of self-possession, and it is against the dispersing, emptying force of duty and responsibility that Emerson preaches his American version of the faith of the Savoyard Vicar: "No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and evil are but names readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution; the only wrong what is against it." The highest good is self-affirmation, and thus Emerson concludes, "If I am the Devil's child, I will live then from the Devil." Self-loyalty is the antidote to alienation. To thine own self be true is the first commandment.

Ironically, Rousseau's and Emerson's diagnosis of self-loss in social conformity has become conformist wisdom in our time. "Question Authority" is the bumper-sticker philosophy of millions, and it flows directly from the worry that collective demand will corrupt individual integrity. The therapeutic atmosphere of contemporary culture is likewise saturated with variations on the fundamental Rousseauian and Emersonian strategy of resistance to self-alienation: Be Yourself! Some proponents of traditional morality claim that this modern and postmodern quest for "authenticity" is but a cover for self-indulgence and a justification for immoralities; but this reaction misdiagnoses the deep structure of Rousseauian and Emersonian protests against the shaping demands of morality. For at root, the impetus for rejecting traditional morality is protective, not permissive. The worry concerns atonement, not freedom.

Both Rousseau and Emerson are profoundly pessimistic about any form of personal change that is not internally motivated. They despair of the possibility of linking who we presently are to the persons traditional morality would discipline us to become. They cannot see how a man or woman subjected to the disciplines of commandments can be "at-one" with himself or herself. Both see morally mandated personal development as a form of self-destruction, an immolation of one's desires and impulses for the sake of something extrinsic to the self. Thus, in order to affirm their loyalty to their own individuality, both Rousseau and Emerson reject all forms of moral discipline that are not tailored to their consciences. Again, I want to emphasize that the goal is not to clear away moral demands in order to make room for heedless self-indulgence. Neither Rousseau nor Emerson wants us to disperse ourselves in vain projects that yield only momentary satisfaction. They want our unique circumstances, our distinctive needs as individuals, and our intensely personal sensibilities and feelings to guide a life of self-possession, since only in this way can we be both morally ambitious and "at-one" with ourselves.

Christian critics of modernity are quick to point out that it is a Promethean fantasy to imagine that moral ideals can somehow emanate out of this project of self-loyalty. Even critics who have no faith at all have asserted that the idea of moral discipline tailored to individuality is a recipe for, at best, mediocrity. Nietzsche was perhaps the most colorful of the irreligious critics of the modern hopes for an individualistic morality that is applicable to all. According to Nietzsche, those who appeal to secular substitutes for the moral discipline provided by traditional Christianity are nothing more than "comedians of the Christian-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

moral ideal." With delicious invective, Nietzsche describes the legions of modern educators who are forever trying to teach a humanistic ethic as "whited sepulchers who impersonate life." Equal-opportunity individualism will produce a wishy-washy morality that does not have the courage of saying an unequivocal "yes" to the irreducible potency of the self, the "will-to-power" of the strong. For Nietzsche, the modern ethic of egalitarian authenticity produces small men who lack the courage to reject morality—or to break themselves heroically across ambitious ideals.

Nietzsche's own proposals for creating ideals are fatally flawed, but I will not argue that here. I've enlisted Nietzsche only to show that even an anti-Christian can recognize and expose the incoherence of Rousseau's and Emerson's moral vision. But simply to show the failure of modern humanistic ethics is not to make Christian humanism immediately more plausible. In order to do that, I want to show that the underlying concern about self-loyalty that motivated important modern thinkers such as Rousseau and Emerson is, in fact, very much a part of the Christian tradition. Modernity did not discover the threat of alienation. The concern about self-loyalty is present in classical Christian literature as well, and it is a concern that Christianity meets head on.

St. Augustine's story of his conversion to Christianity, for instance, turns on the same problem of atonement and personal identity that worries Rousseau and Emerson. As a young man, Augustine read Cicero's *Hortensius*. "The book changed my feelings," he writes in his *Confessions*. "It gave me different values and priorities. . . . Suddenly every vain hope became empty to me, and I longed for the immortality of wisdom." With newfound zeal, Augustine embarked on a search for the truth.

For Augustine, the search was difficult and involved setbacks, but in the end he came to see the truth of Christianity. Yet this was not enough. For all his intellectual gains, nothing had changed for him as an individual. "I myself was exceedingly astonished," he reports, "as I anxiously reflected how long a time had elapsed since the nineteenth year of my life, when I began to burn with a zeal for wisdom, planning that when I had found it I would abandon all the empty hopes and lying follies of hollow ambitions. And here I was already thirty, and still mucking about in the same mire in a state of indecision."

The problem Augustine faced is one of personal identity, not human nature. Augustine was convinced that chastity is virtuous, and that virtue is a fulfillment and not a diminishment of his nature as a rational creature. He had no difficulty imagining a transformed human nature—and yet, he could not change. "Fettered by the flesh's morbid impulse and lethal sweetness, I dragged my chain, but was afraid to be free of it." Augustine sought to change, but he could not, for he wished to be loyal to himself. "Now I had discovered the good pearl. To buy it I had to sell all that I had," but, he reports with dismay, "I hesitated." Augustine loved his habits, and he could not conceive of living without them, not because he thought them good, but simply because the habits were *his*.

Augustine's story of his spiritual journey dramatizes the true nature of our resistance to the Christian view of redemption, a resistance expressed in such influential modern form by Rousseau and Emerson. Like Dante before the wall of fire that forms the exit from purgatory, Augustine hesitated before the disjunctive demand of Christian morality, a demand that is the moral form of the promise of redemptive change. The demand seems to require a death of the self, a renunciation of personal identity. Augustine could not believe that a bush might burn without being consumed.

In his modest divine comedy, *The Great Divorce*, C. S. Lewis portrays this fear of renunciation. The spectral souls who are met by the Solid People at the entrance to heaven can only journey toward God if they will give up their doubts, vices, and shame. In Lewis' account, few do, and the reason is simple. They cannot imagine being *themselves* without the very qualities of soul that alienate them from God. As the hissing lizard of lust warns the frightened man in a scene that echoes Augustine's hesitations, "[Without me] how could you live?" It is difficult to trust the Christian promise that undergoing such change will bring new life and not death—will stretch us but not shatter us.

Christian proclamation should have no interest in allaying the existential anxiety that naturally arises when we wonder whether our individual desires, commitments, habits, and projects can really endure an otherworldly ethic. For the otherworldly character of Christian ethics stems from the fact that sin structures our personalities and gives shape to our habits. Sin is not a peripheral defect; it is not an unfortunate but subsidiary feature of our lives. Sin determines our identities. As Augustine was well aware, overcoming this propensity requires becoming a different person. Redemptive change must break the bonds of self-loyalty if we are to be delivered from the self that is in love with its sin. St. Paul uses the starkest possible language: "We know that our old self was crucified with [Christ] so that the body of sin might be destroyed. . . . Whoever has died is freed from sin" (Romans 6:6-7). Insofar as we are loyal to our sinful selves, we quite rationally fear that our identities as persons will not survive redemptive change.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For the martyrs of the early Church, loyalty to Christ was very much a question of physical life and death. Their deaths stand in visible and evident witness to the disjunctive structure of a Christian ethics of redemption. The Pauline language of death, however, does not denote a physical cessation of life. At issue is who we are, as individuals: our loyalties, our commitments, our hopes and aspirations. The Gospels report Jesus saying again and again, "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it." St. Augustine did not face martyrdom, but he felt the horror of loss. It was not as though Augustine was unable to imagine a human being living a celibate life, any more than the rich young man in the Gospels was unable to imagine selling all his possessions. The world has plenty of examples which show that it is possible to be human and celibate or poor. Rather, the problem for Augustine and the rich young man was personal: How can *I* be celibate, how can *I* be poor, without dying to my current projects, loyalties, and commitments? And if I do so die, then will I even be myself anymore? Once again, this is a problem of atonement.

How, then, can I endure redemptive change? For Christian faith, the answer rests in the identity of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. He is *pro nobis*, "for us," as the incorporative power of redemption. In some classical accounts of atonement, this incorporative power is discussed in terms of an exchange or substitution. Others describe a representative or pedagogical role that Jesus plays. The metrics of analysis can focus variously on debt, penalty, sacrifice, or moral influence. Each account has its advantages and disadvantages, but what unifies atonement theory is a common concern to show that the changes both effected and demanded by the Christian view of redeemed life *can be met*. A link can be established between old and new, between dying to sin and coming to life, and that link is to be found in Christ.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer provides analysis that highlights this aspect of atonement theory. Describing the logic of redemption, Bonhoeffer observes, "God does not 'overlook' sin; that would mean not taking human beings seriously as personal beings in their very culpability." Whatever God does for human beings in Christ, it must be a "doing" that accounts for the reality of our lives as we actually live them. Bonhoeffer continues with the central affirmation of all atonement theory: "God does take human beings seriously in their culpability, and therefore only punishment and the overcoming of sin can remedy the matter." This punishment Christ endures in our place.

Readers should not stumble over Bonhoeffer's use of punishment as the metric to describe the conditions for divine seriousness about the particularity of human life. He might have used satisfaction or sacrifice or pedagogy or some other as-yet-undiscovered concept to describe the bridging function that links the person who has died to his old self with the one who lives as a new person in Christ. The crucial point is that Jesus Christ does what is necessary to establish the link; he effects atonement, and we participate in that atonement.

One of the greatest problems with atonement theory is that the terms are so often abstract. Debts must be paid; satisfaction must be offered; sacrifice must be made. This seems remote from the concern about authenticity that we moderns have learned from the likes of Rousseau and Emerson. In the Letters of St. Paul, from which a great deal of Western Christian atonement theory draws its inspiration, the link to authenticity is more evident, because Paul sees the incorporative power of Jesus Christ as enacted concretely in the lives of believers. "Do you not know," Paul asks the Christians in Rome, "that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4). At issue is not an abstract reconciliation of cosmic accounts. God is not up in heaven calculating debts and payments. Rather, for Paul, God is doing something here and now, and that "doing" is addressed to concrete individuals. The incorporative power of Jesus Christ, given objective form in the sacrament of baptism and subjective form in faith, carries the believer across the difference between a life dominated by sin and a life that stretches in authenticity toward righteousness.

As a consequence, Paul can use the greatest possible image of disjunction—death—while still affirming a continuity of personal identity. Jesus Christ is the enduring power across this disjunction. He has died and has been raised. The promise of the gospel is that we can participate in his bridging reality. The upshot is atonement. However great the moral demands, we can stretch toward them, even stretch to the point of dying to ourselves, without shattering our lives. To put the matter in scriptural terms more familiar to students of classical theories of atonement: in Christ, we can draw near to the holiness of God without being consumed by the purifying fires of judgment. We can become radically different—even holy—without emptying ourselves of our individuality.

A clear expression of this confidence that radical moral demand is consistent with continuous personal identity may be found in Pope John Paul II's encycli-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cal on fundamental questions in moral theology, *Veritatis Splendor*. The dominant theme of the encyclical is the sovereignty of moral truth, not only as universal and unchanging, but also as commanding the loyalty of the whole person. The ideal of moral perfection flows from this sovereignty, and John Paul's specific reflections on technical questions in Roman Catholic moral theology are detailed defenses of the scope and depth of moral demand against various efforts to narrow and soften ethical obligations. One of the most important discussions concerns the relationship between divine law and human freedom. There, John Paul responds to contemporary worries about self-alienation with this dogmatic claim: "Patterned on God's freedom, man's freedom is not negated by his obedience to the divine law; indeed, only through this obedience does it abide in truth and conform to human dignity." The demands of Christian ethics, even the counsels of perfection (as in that intimidating Sermon on the Mount) that press the follower of Christ toward supernatural ends, are a fulfillment rather than a diminishment of our individuality.

In order to make good on this claim, John Paul must provide some account of atonement. He does not adopt or articulate any particular theory. Instead, he reiterates the basic dynamics of Romans 6. For John Paul, the sovereignty of moral truth "is confirmed in a particularly eloquent way by Christian martyrdom." Spiritual death to the dominion of worldly powers may well be accompanied by physical death. The earthly kingdom may hang its traitors. Yet the eloquence of the martyrs rests in more than the extremity of their obedience. For John Paul, as for the early Church, the eloquence of martyrdom is evangelical, not Stoic, for the path of suffering and death recapitulates the way of Jesus Christ. The same holds for the less visible suffering of all who feel the painful death of worldly loyalties—hating mother and father, plucking out the eyes of lust, selling possessions dearly loved. The very real personal grief and travail under the disciplines of moral perfection recapitulate the way of the Man of Sorrows. This recapitulation serves as a figural expression of the logic of classical atonement theory. We can endure being stretched across the demands of discipleship because Christ has gone before us to establish the way. He has stretched himself out upon the cross.

At this point the concerns of Rousseau and Emerson return. John Paul's unembarrassed affirmation of the goal of moral perfection and his embrace of the ideal of martyrdom would seem to vindicate the criticism that Christian faith does violence to the human person—that while Christianity may talk of redemption, it actually nurtures a death wish, a ruthless self-denial that relishes suffering. And certainly it is legitimate to wonder whether the sovereignty of a moral truth that is most visible in martyrdom leaves room for individuality, for the projects and loyalties that populate our lives and shape our identities. Far from making us "at-one" with ourselves in Christ, the perfection of Christian moral demands seems to drive a wedge into our lives and split us in two: the thin sliver of righteousness and obedience over against the vast reality of our unredeemed lives.

Were the Israelites at the base of Mount Sinai right to exclaim in fear, "Do not let God speak to us, or we will die" (Exodus 20:19)? A return to St. Augustine allows us to see how the Christian process of redemptive change can consume profoundly intimate loyalties and habits in the fires of self-discipline, while still affirming our authentic personal continuity. On this point, the crucial aspect of his *Confessions* is not any particular theological argument Augustine makes. Instead, what stands out is the successful literary combination of disjunction with continuity. Augustine both pushes away his past in repudiation and draws it near in memory.

The key to Augustine's success is the repentant structure of the first eight books of the *Confessions*. This structure allows him to drive a wedge between his present identity and his past loyalties. He sought pleasure, self-command, fame, knowledge, and even wisdom. All of this was vain and nugatory. In his self-description, however, Augustine does not push away his past as we so often do in our own self-assessments. He does not say of his youthful lusts that they were learning experiences. He does not seek to submerge his particularity as a person into some general pattern of maturation, as when we say, "It was an adolescent stage." He does not make himself anonymous by excusing his errors and sins as functions of inauspicious circumstances or bad social influences. Rather, he draws his youthful lusts and his adult vainglory as closely as possible to his identity. Augustine claims every episode, every byway and dead-end of his seeking, as *both* wrong *and* his own. One cannot repent of what one refuses to own.

To both renounce and own the main features of one's life, as does Augustine in the voice of repentance, creates a literary effect that we might rightly call atonement. It is possible because, at every turn, Augustine's penitent voice places the reality of his life into the hands of God. He concludes the extended address to God that opens the *Confessions* with these words: "Dust and ashes though I am, let me appeal to your pity, since it is to you in mercy that I speak, not to a man, who would simply laugh at me. Perhaps you, too, may laugh at me, but you will relent and have pity on me." God's identity as the one who comes as the power of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

redemption allows Augustine to own his past as indeed his own, while, at the very same time, he can disown it as governed by sin. God atones for those whose lives are broken, as was Augustine's, across the difference between love of self and desire for the divine.

Donald MacKinnon was one of the more idiosyncratic theologians of the twentieth century, and his capacity to think against the grain of conventional theological fashions led him to recognize that we often puzzle out our deepest questions in disguised or muddled forms. Writing in the 1960s, when the key questions of morality and religion were framed in epistemological terms, he offered these cautionary words of dissent: "The philosopher of religion easily tends to think that the greatest obstacles today in the way of religious belief are to be found in the unintelligibility and inadmissibility of such fundamental concepts as that of a creator God, an immaterial soul, etc. But it may be that as a matter of empirical fact, the most deep-seated unwillingness to take seriously the claims of the Christian religion has its roots in a sharp criticism of Christian ethics, of the Christian image of the good life."

I have little doubt that MacKinnon was correct. However little Rudolf Bultmann's "modern man" was capable of believing in the "mythological worldview" of premodern culture, I am certain that the postmodern men and women of today are capable of believing almost anything. Ours is a skeptical age, and the fruit of skepticism is most often credulity. We know that we cannot know, so we settle for what is convenient or alluring or exciting or familiar. Why stretch myself when there is nothing out there to stretch toward, and when I'm okay as I am, more or less? The revulsion that we postmodern men and women feel toward Christian ethics stems in large part from the way in which redemptive hope endorses a disjunctive, otherworldly ethic, one that seeks a new identity in Christ.

You can attempt to show the theological cogency of this ethical demand, a cogency that rests in the clarity of the Christian identification of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, who, for us and for our salvation, became incarnate, was crucified, died, and was raised by the Father. You can show how the premise that Christ is the Son of God who is "for us" allows for an analysis of atonement that makes Christian moral ambition an authentic possibility and a possibility of authenticity. You can expound the repentant logic of Augustine's *Confessions* to illustrate the way that Christianity, unlike the dominant modern ways of talking about moral change, encourages a life of morally ambitious self-renunciation and honest self-loyalty. But if the postmodern world falls back into modern doubt and says, "But how can you prove that Jesus really is the incarnate Son of God who died for us and for our salvation?"—then you have little recourse other than proclamation. As Karl Barth knew and never tired of insisting, the grace of God is the answer to every ethical question. Only the power of the great divine fact, the God who is who He is, can overcome our fear of moral change.

The evangelical imperative in our time is thus clear. Be patient with Rousseauians and Emersonians whose anxious desire for self-possession causes them to shrink from the sovereign ambitions of the Christian moral life. Their fear of redemptive change is an honorable fear, one that St. Augustine himself named as his own strongest resistance to God. But don't confuse patience with concession. Tell them patiently that Christ came to redeem us and that there is no danger that the disciplines of the Christian life will stretch us beyond the breaking point—not even those of us who already feel "maxed out." Christ, crucified and raised, promises otherwise. FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Freedom and Decency

David B. Hart

Things could conceivably be far worse. The brief ebullition of indignation that followed Janet Jackson's rather pathetic exhibitionist display during the Super Bowl's halftime show was no doubt sincere, but surely it was nothing compared to the fury in Poland earlier this year after Polish state television aired a concert by a Norwegian "black metal" band in Krakow. The entertainment reportedly featured—among other whimsical conceits—naked women hanging from crosses (one of whom had to be hospitalized when she lost consciousness), a dozen sheeps' heads impaled on stakes, perhaps a hundred liters of sheep's blood poured over the performers and their audience, a stage festooned with satanist sigils, and songs of praise to the devil. Not that this concert was in any sense a departure for Norwegians: such bands are perhaps Norway's chief cultural export these days, and among their giddily irrepressible devotees they enjoy a celebrity of the sort once accorded to Paganini. Their performances invariably involve roughly equal measures of cruelty, obscenity, sacrilege, diabolism, and Norse paganism (thus accomplishing the difficult feat of simultaneously blaspheming both the Christian God and Odin). But it was certainly a departure for Polish television.

This, for me at least, places the episode of Ms. Jackson's outraged bustier in a somewhat more forgiving light. Diversions and delights similar to the Krakow concert are not entirely unknown in America, but they appeal to a rather select and fugitive company; as yet, the nihilisms we allow to disport themselves at the center of our culture are more anodyne, or at least less explicit regarding their spiritual wellsprings. National television has not yet treated us to satanists cavorting among dismembered animals and obscene mockeries of the crucifixion, and our chief cultural export—in terms of profits generated, at least—is not yet blasphemy (it remains, if one is curious, pornography). Measured against other degenerate cultures, we are still, in some respects, at the stage of a touchingly maladroit infancy.

Of course, it is always easy to flatter ourselves by reflecting upon the depths to which we have not yet descended, but we should resist the temptation to do so. In the nations of Scandinavia the Western European attempt to strike a happy balance between scrupulously amoral free-market consumerism and intrusively moralistic bureaucratic state socialism may have achieved something like a perfect synthesis: a sugar-soaked and narcotic totalitarianism so enveloping in its providence and so libertine in its materialism as to threaten to reduce its peoples to an almost brutish pliancy. It is not surprising, then, that many of Norway's young, when they choose to cast off the placidity of sheep, can imagine no better model for their rebellion than the pitilessness of wolves (this, at any rate, might explain the peculiar malice towards sheep exhibited in Krakow); when human existence has been winnowed down to an oscillation between ignoble complacency and shameless appetite, the golden mean between the ovine and the lupine can become elusive.

The question that interests me, however, is whether our cultural crisis in America is any less acute. It is true that things could be worse; it is also true that they probably will be very soon. It is heartening, naturally, to live in a country where so much righteous ire can be stirred by a fleeting glimpse of something the unarrested sight of which—on almost any summer day along certain sandy banks of the Seine—nourishes the noon-

DAVID B. HART *is an Eastern Orthodox theologian and author of* The Beauty of the Infinite *(Eerdmans, 2003).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

day reveries of many a Parisian schoolboy. It attests to the persistence among us of the kind of social virtue—call it bourgeois respectability, or puritanism, or simple decency—that is too often appreciated only in the aftermath of its disintegration. That said, however, there is still something odd in the symbolic importance this event has assumed for many, given that far worse evidences of the rapid coarsening of our culture surround us on every side all the time (examples are too numerous and obvious to cite). I suspect that among those who professed their dismay at the halftime show there were many who as a rule are willing to tolerate most of the corrosive influences that invade family life—from advertising, films, popular music, the Internet, video games, the language we have all become accustomed to hearing every day—so long as those influences continue unobtrusively to operate in their "proper" places.

This is not to say that there is not a real division in American society between those of devout and traditionalist temperament, who try to abide by some common standard of decency or courtesy, and those who regard any cultural resistance to vulgarity, or vicious fantasy, or explicit violence, or sexual degradation as an obstacle to be surmounted. Nor should one fail to deplore the sheer boorishness with which the latter class feels free to impose the refuse of its imagination on the former (what was truly appalling about the recent halftime show was simply its incivility). The true depth of our social division is, however, difficult to ascertain. It is one thing to lament the discourtesy of those who delight in giving offense, but another thing altogether to provide an effective remedy for it; and only when we honestly ask ourselves what remedy we are willing to contemplate will it become clear whether as a people we are truly engaged in a "culture war" (as we are often told we are) or are simply witnessing the effects of a genuine but transient tension between more refractory and more energetic elements within a single cultural process.

I say this because my first impulse is to suggest that the simple (if not sufficient) answer to our cultural dilemma is probably censorship, against which almost every argument in the abstract is predictably fatuous. Upon this, it seems to me, any sane society should be able uncontentiously to agree. And yet ours cannot. That such a prescription should be either controversial or scandalous—as in fact it is—suggests that something is profoundly amiss in our culture, some defect that runs far deeper than any mere division between the pious and the profane, or between the puritanical and the hedonistic. Certainly there is nothing in the constitutional charter of free (political, religious, ideological) speech that obliges us to permit any product, no matter how depraved its content, to be created, sold, promulgated, procured, or kept. More importantly, though—and this should be obvious—a society that refuses all censorship is in some very crucial sense extremely unjust.

Every nation with any pretense to civilization must be governed by some regime of civic prudence, possessing the power to place certain restraints upon public transactions. Without such a regime, a society cannot assure its citizens any measure of genuinely civil freedom, by which I mean the freedom that only a rigidly observed social courtesy—necessarily confining and somewhat artificially ceremonious—provides: freedom from other people's bad taste. There is almost no such thing as purely private expression under the best of circumstances; in the age of mass communication, when every venture into a public space quickly becomes complete immersion in a world of jarring noise and garish pomps and shrill distraction, it is folly to imagine that one can if one chooses simply "turn things off" and go unmolested by the worst elements of popular culture. It is folly also to believe that the cause of freedom is advanced when a society's citizens cannot demand—with the full force of law and custom on their side—that others not be given license to subject them constantly to offensive materials or to corrupt their children with impunity.

This is, one could argue, the simplest matter of moral stewardship. The forces of barbarism that are always eager to assail civilization—from without and within—are, if not tireless, at least remarkably resilient. Where no codes of civil conduct govern cultural production, it is inevitable that those who are coarsest and most conscienceless—those who are most wanting in shame, restraint, imagination, modesty, consideration, or charity—will prevail. What, then, of everyone else whose peace and dignity a just political order should be concerned to protect? I think it safe to say there has never been a society where the lewd, the dissolute, or the perverted have not been able to find some place for their recreation, and this is a reality to which we are wise to be in some degree resigned. But we live now in an age in which indecency refuses to be confined within its own sphere, but rather forces itself upon us, and indeed demands (almost sanctimoniously) that it be embraced and granted social legitimacy, and that it be subject to no strictures other than those of the free market. Anyone so quaintly retrograde as to want to escape the deluge must retreat to some jealously insulated domestic realm, guarded with almost martial vigilance against any intrusion by the encircling culture.

It is difficult to make sense of many of the conventional arguments against censorship. The objection that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in my experience tends to be adduced most promptly (and with the greatest degree of hysteria) is that of the "slippery slope": grant some agency the legal power of censure, the argument goes, and before long political speech will be suppressed, privacy invaded, legal protections eroded, republican liberties abridged, schools taken over by fundamentalists from Alabama, women reduced to chattels, and the demonic ferment of fascism lying always just below the surface of American life set loose upon the world. This, at any rate, was the case that a depressingly earnest civil liberties attorney in North Carolina once made to me—with such an air of catechetical exactitude that it was clear she was merely giving voice to a deeply entrenched professional orthodoxy. It was simply inconceivable to her that a humane regime of censorship could be evolved in such a way as to make abuse of its authority all but legally impossible. Apparently, as a society, we are poised precariously upon the narrowest precipice of a sheer escarpment as smooth as glass, overlooking a vast chasm of totalitarian tyranny; so much as a single step towards censorship will send us hurtling into the abyss, and nothing will be able to stay our fall.

This is, of course, nonsense. In the days when the U.S. Post Office had the authority to prosecute those who delivered obscene materials through the mails, and cinema was subject to the Hayes Office, and communities were permitted to ban books, there were certainly cases of excessive zeal in the application of these powers, and instances when provincialism triumphed over art, and perhaps many miscarriages of justice; but, mirabile dictu, we were not at the mercy of a secret police; warrantless incarceration in nameless prisons, torture, murdered journalists, the cult of the Great Leader, the rule of clandestine tribunals, the bullet in the back of the head at dawn—all of these things remained miraculously absent from our society. Were there any historical example of republican freedom weakened or subverted by public and commercial codes of decency, this line of argument might command some force. As it is, it seems to me that any people that honestly believes political despotism to be the inevitable consequence of any constraints being placed upon the dissemination of popular artifacts—say, forbidding the sale of recordings made by some sullen thug fantasizing about raping his girlfriend's daughter—is a people that has elevated the cult of personal liberty to a new and oppressive fanaticism.

A somewhat more plausible objection is that a public censor will as often as not turn out to be some well-intentioned philistine who cannot distinguish artistically or conceptually accomplished treatments of delicate themes from simple pornography; and this, in turn, will have a stifling effect on artists and thinkers. Here, one must acknowledge, there is enough historical evidence to render this anxiety credible. It does require a fairly perceptive and finely discriminating eye to judge intelligently the intrinsic qualities of any work of art. It is somewhat embarrassing to recall the legal perils that delayed production of an American edition of *Lolita*, which is really—quite apart from its extraordinary aesthetic merit—a rather moral and even slightly prudish work (though Nabokov would bristle at those words). That *Ulysses* ever had to appear before an American bar of justice now rightly seems ridiculous. Of course, we would all have been better off to have been spared the overrated, intellectually arthritic, and incompetently written *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, but two cases out of three are sufficient to make the point.

Even here, however, I am still largely unconvinced. For one thing, great art endures, and over time distinguishes itself from all the lesser accomplishments with which it might initially have been confused; and it is not necessarily a bad thing for the artist who wishes to treat of things usually left decently veiled to have to submit his work to the ordeal of prevailing moral prejudice: it is likely, for one thing, to inspire more ingenious art, as well as to test the mettle of the artist. There were many inconveniences suffered by the "urbane" bibliophile in the days when the unexpurgated Aretino or Rochester was available only in private editions, and Burton's complete *Thousand Nights and a Night* existed only in limited printings, and volumes of Pierre Louÿs were sold exclusively out of back rooms and in borrowed dust-jackets by booksellers of dubious character, and Frederick Rolfe's Venetian letters could bring fines and imprisonment to their purveyors; but I am not convinced that the cause of civilization was grievously impaired by such inconveniences. Nor does it seem plausible to me to suggest that our national literature has noticeably improved since these fetters were struck off. There is, after all, a kind of philistinism on either side of this issue. Is good art suppressed more by rules of public decency (even when applied with a heavy hand) or by the barbarism of a culture whose sensibilities have become so debauched by constant exposure to the scabrous and the vile as to have become incapable of any discrimination, or of any due appreciation of subtlety or craft?

Consider one of the more obvious cases of commercial standards abandoned, that of cinema. For all the ponderous parochialism of the old motion picture code, it did at the very least demand of screenwriters the kind of delicate technique necessary to communicate certain things to mature viewers without giving any hint of their meaning to the children also watching. Thus films had to be written by adults, and the best

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

films required writers of some considerable skill. After all, everyone of a certain age in the audience was well aware of what things occurred between men and women in private. They understood, therefore, what may have happened between Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman when the camera cut away to the watchtower's revolving beam of light; what had failed to happen when Spencer Tracy quietly slipped out of Katharine Hepburn's apartment, neglecting to take his hat with him; what it was that Katharine Hepburn was both relieved and offended to discover had not happened when, on the previous evening, her inebriation had required Jimmy Stewart to carry her to her bed; what Bogart and Bacall were really discussing under the veil of their equestrian metaphors; why Glenn Ford was treating Rita Hayworth with at once such tenderness and such malice; and what Barbara Stanwyck was implying when she wrapped her arms around Fred MacMurray's neck and murmured, "But, darling, we *are* at Niagara Falls."

Well, nostalgia can be a particularly toxic opiate, perhaps. Obviously many extraordinary films have been produced since the Hayes Office vanished—there was even a brief golden age of sorts in the early 1970s—and among them have been many that could never have appeared under the old code. Even now, one is occasionally astonished by some gold amid the dross (my life would have been somewhat poorer, I think, without *O Brother, Where Art Thou*—though, as a Preston Sturges aficionado, I had little choice but to like it). Nevertheless, the current state of cinema seems to suggest that where good (or at least clever) writing is not a commercial necessity, and where there are no artificially imposed limits within which writers must work, the general intellectual quality of the medium cannot help but decline, and do considerable cultural damage as it descends. It would certainly be hard, if nothing else, to argue credibly that artistic expression has been well served by the revolution in standards that has made scriptwriting an occupation dominated by sadistic adolescents, and hard to claim that the art has flourished in an era in which it has been proved that immense profits can be generated from minimal dialogue but plenteous bloodshed, and in which practically nothing is considered too degraded or degrading to be offered to the public.

All my bitter musings aside, however, let me stipulate that, in an ideal situation, the practice of censorship would be undertaken only by persons properly educated and formed, whose decisions would be under some form of collective review. But, precisely at this point (alas), I encounter an obstacle to censorship that makes a creditable regime of public standards seem so unlikely as to be, for all intents and purposes, a utopian fantasy. For while it really is not that difficult to recognize irredeemable obscenity when one encounters it, as things now stand it is difficult to say whom—what class of persons—one would care to entrust with a censor's authority. We live at a time, after all, when even the humanities departments in our universities are frequently populated by scholars of rather exiguous learning, who think that *épater les bourgeoises* is a significant cultural and moral achievement, and who—in their insatiable craving for ever greater *frissons* of the subversive—can make an "artist," "philosopher," and "martyr" out of an ineffably tedious mediocrity like the Marquis de Sade. Censors drawn from those ranks might prove eager and indefatigable in searching out and suppressing every form of "hate speech" (that is, anything you are likely to find in a papal encyclical), but little else. I do not believe that, if we were to create some sort of board of censors, we would be likely to suffer the reign of the American equivalent of Soviet realist art; but this is in part because the persons we would choose for the office might not be sufficiently sophisticated to rise to so plausible a level of philistinism. Simply said, it may be that we no longer have enough civilization left to save.

At least, in my darker moments (which are frequent), that is what I think. At the end of the day, however, it does not matter whether I am right to do so; all of these considerations have about them something of the fabulous and absurd. Obviously no new laws of censorship will be passed in America; even among those who sincerely wish that the circumambient culture could be purged of its ever more aggressive coarseness, there are many who would see such laws as somehow contrary to the principles of their democracy and a threat to liberty in general. This is why I suspect—as I hinted above—that the real malady afflicting our culture lies not primarily in the division between those who would prefer and those who would resent more rigid social standards of decency, but far deeper down, in many of the premises that both parties share.

As it happens, by far the worst argument against censorship is the one likely to carry most weight with persons on both sides of the cultural divide: that, were certain cultural products legally proscribed, we would be denying people things they want, denying them the right to choose for themselves, putting limits upon expressive freedom, refusing to trust in the law of supply and demand—all of which is, of course, quite true. But to find this a compelling argument, one must already be convinced of the inalienable sanctity of choice, over against every other social good, and con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vinced, moreover, that freedom and choice are more or less synonymous. It is indeed true that many of us manifestly do want unimpeded access to explicit depictions of sex and violence, and to mindlessly brutal forms of entertainment, and to artifacts born solely from the basest impulses of the imagination; but surely, in point of fact, no society that simply concedes the prior right of its citizens to have whatever they want can ever really be free.

This is the crucial issue, I think: not what we understand decency to be, but what we mean when we speak of freedom. It is a curious condition of late Western modernity that, for so many of us, the highest ideal of the good society is simply democracy as such, and then within democracy varying alloys of capitalism, the welfare state, regionalism, federalism, individualism, and so on. And what we habitually understand democratic liberty to be—what we take, that is, as our most exalted model of freedom—is merely the unobstructed power of choice. The consequence of this, manifestly, is that we tend to elevate what should at best be regarded as the moral life's minimal condition to the status of its highest expression, and in the process reduce the very concept of freedom to one of purely libertarian or voluntarist spontaneity. We have come to believe—more or less unreflectively—that the will necessarily becomes more free the more it is emancipated from whatever constraints it suffers; which means that, over the course of time, even our most revered moral traditions can come to seem onerous nuisances that we must shed if we are to secure our "rights." At the very last, any constraint at all comes to seem an intolerable bondage. But it was not ever thus.

Obviously any sane organism is predisposed to resist subjugation to forces outside itself—which is to say, forces related to it only by their power over it—and every healthy soul has a natural prejudice in favor of its own autonomy. Moreover, any rational person naturally prefers the local to the general, the familiar to the abstract, the intimate to the universal, and so resents the intrusion of any alien or usurpatious power (the state, or large corporations, or heartless bureaucracies, or unjust laws) upon the independence or integrity of his person, or family, or native place, or culture, or faith. But this is to say no more than that it is natural to rebel against purely arbitrary or extrinsic constraints, either upon oneself or upon what one loves. What distinguishes the specifically modern conception of freedom from earlier models, however, especially in its most extreme expressions, is that it seems often to presume that all constraints are arbitrary and extrinsic, and that there is no such thing as a natural or intrinsic constraint at all.

And yet—and I would not even go so far as to call this a paradox—freedom is possible only through constraints. That sane organism of which I spoke above can be solicitous of its autonomy only because it is some particular thing; and for anything to be anything at all—to possess, that is, a concrete form—it must acquire and cultivate useful, defining, shaping limits. True freedom, at least according to one venerable definition, is the realization of a complex nature in its proper good (that is, in both its natural and supernatural ends); it is the freedom of a thing to flourish, to become ever more fully what it is. An absolutely "negative liberty"—the absence of any religious, cultural, or social restrictions upon the exercise of the will—may often seem desirable (at least for oneself) but ultimately offers only the "freedom" of chaos, of formless potential. This is enough, admittedly, if one's highest model of life is protoplasm; but if one suspects that, as rational beings, we are called to a somewhat more elevated moral existence than that, one must begin to ask which impulses within us should be suppressed, both by ourselves and by the cultural rules that we all must share.

For instance, if one wishes to become "honorable" (a word so quaint and antique as now to have the power to charm but not to compel), one must accede to any number of elaborate restrictions upon one's actions and even thoughts; and these restrictions unquestionably confine and inhibit desire and volition, and are themselves often more a matter of ritual comity and factitious grace and painful reserve than of practical necessity. And yet, as one learns to consent to a common and demanding set of conventions and duties, one also progressively acquires an ever greater purity of character, a stability and hence identity, a unified "self"; one emerges from the inchoate turmoil of mere emotion, and is liberated from the momentary impulses and vain promptings of the will, and arrives at what can truly be called one's essence. The form, as Michelangelo liked to say, is liberated from the marble. In this way, precisely through accepting freely the constraints of a larger social and moral tradition and community, one gives shape to a character that can endure from moment to moment, rather than dissolving in each instant into whichever new inclination of appetite or curiosity rises up within one. One ceases to be governed by caprice, or to be the slave of one's own liberty.

This understanding of freedom, however, requires not only the belief that we possess an actual nature, which must flourish to be free, but a belief in the transcendent Good towards which that nature is oriented. This Christians, Jews, and virtuous pagans have always understood: that which can endure in us is sustained by

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that which lies beyond us, in the eternity of its own plenitude. To be fully free is to be joined to that end for which our natures were originally framed, and for which—in the deepest reaches of our souls—we ceaselessly yearn. And whatever separates us from that end—even if it be our own power of choice within us—is a form of bondage. We are free not because we can choose, but only when we have chosen well. And to choose well we must ever more clearly see the "sun of the Good" (to employ the lovely Platonic metaphor), and yet to see more clearly we must choose well; and the more we are emancipated from illusion and caprice, and the more our will is informed by and responds to the Good, the more perfect our vision becomes, and the less there is really to choose. The consummation for which we should long, if we are wise, is that ultimately we shall, in St. Augustine's language, achieve not only the liberty enjoyed by Adam and Eve—who were merely "able not to sin" (*posse non peccare*)—but the truest freedom of all, that of being entirely "unable to sin" (*non posse peccare*), because God's will works perfectly in ours.

Which is why it is not only perplexing but deeply disturbing that so many Christians and Jews in the modern world unthinkingly embrace and defend a purely libertarian understanding of freedom, even as they decry the constant gravitation of modern society toward ever more arbitrary, decadent, and extreme expressions of just this kind of freedom. They cannot be acquitted on the grounds that the cultivation of virtue is the work of individual souls and not of society at large, for there is no such thing as private virtue, any more than there is such a thing as private language, and fallen creatures vary enormously in their capacity for obedience to the Good. Though to say this might make me seem like an unregenerate Christian Platonist (which is not too dreadful a fate, since that is precisely what I am), a society is *just* precisely to the degree that it makes true freedom possible; to do this it must leave certain areas of moral existence to govern themselves, but it must also in many cases seek to defeat the most vicious aspects of fallen nature, and to aid as far as possible in the elevation in each soul of right reason over mere appetite and impulse—which necessarily involves denying certain persons the things they want most. A just social order, that is to say, would be one devoted to what might be called a "pedagogy of the Good," and would recognize that there can be no simple partition between the polity of the soul and the polity of the people, and that there is in fact a reciprocal spiritual relation—a harmony—between them. When appetite seizes the reins of the soul or the city, it drives the chariot toward ruin; so it is the very art of sound governance to seek to perfect the intricate and delicate choreography of moral and legal custom that will best promote the sway of reverent reason in city and soul alike.

Democracy is not something intrinsically good, after all. Where the moral formation of a people is deficient, the general will malign, or historical circumstance unpropitious, democracy is quite unambiguously wicked in its results. All of Plato's warnings against "ochlocracy" have been proved right often enough, even within the confines of duly constituted republics, and even he could not have foreseen the magnitude of the evil that can be born from a popular franchise (the Third Reich leaps here rather nimbly to mind). The only sound premise for a people's self-governance is a culture of common virtue directed towards the one Good. And a society that can no longer conceive of freedom as anything more than limitless choice and uninhibited self-expression must of necessity progressively conclude that all things should be permitted, that all values are relative, that desire fashions its own truth, that there is no such thing as "nature," that we are our own creatures. The ultimate consequence of a purely libertarian political ethos, if it could be taken to its logical end, would be a world in which we would no longer even remember that we should want to choose the good, as we would have learned to deem things good solely because they have been chosen. This would in truth be absolute slavery to the momentary, the final eclipse of rational dignity, the triumph within us of the bestial over the spiritual, and so of death over life.

When all is said and done, however, as I have already more or less acknowledged, I am trading here not merely in speculation, but in extravagant fantasy. We are very far removed indeed from a culture capable of such pedagogy—perhaps farther now than at almost any other point in Western history. And in the age of the omnicompetent liberal state, when government is at once more intimately invasive of and more airily abstracted from the concrete reality of communities and families, even to speak of moral pedagogy is likely to invite any number of pernicious authoritarianisms. Moreover, we are very near to a consensus as a society not only that choice and self-expression are values in and of themselves, but that they are perhaps the highest values of all; and no society can believe such nonsense unless it has forsaken almost every substantial good.

This is why, as I say, I am not convinced that we are in any very meaningful sense in the midst of a "culture war"; I think it might at best be described as a fracas. I do not say that such a war would not be worth waging. Yet most of us have already uncon-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sciously surrendered to the more insidious aspects of modernity long before we even contemplate drawing our swords from their scabbards and inspecting them for rust. This is not to say that there are no practical measures for those who wish in earnest for the battle to be joined: homeschooling or private "trivium" academies; the disposal or locking away of televisions; prohibitions on video games and popular music; Greek and Latin; great books; remote places; archaic enthusiasms. It is generally wise to seek to be separate, to be in the world but not of it, to be no more engaged with modernity than were the ancient Christians with the culture of pagan antiquity; and wise also to cultivate in our hearts a generous hatred toward the secular order, and a charitable contempt. Probably the most subversive and effective strategy we might undertake would be one of militant fecundity: abundant, relentless, exuberant, and defiant childbearing. Given the reluctance of modern men and women to be fruitful and multiply, it would not be difficult, surely, for the devout to accomplish—in no more than a generation or two—a demographic revolution. Such a course is quite radical, admittedly, and contrary to the spirit of the age, but that is rather the point, after all. It would mean often forgoing certain material advantages, and forfeiting a great deal of our leisure; it would often prove difficult to sustain a two-career family or to be certain of a lavish retirement. But if it is a war we want, we should not recoil from sacrifice.

In the end, however, no matter how much we would like to win back the culture around us, we can hope for no "victory" at all—no matter what practical measures we take—if we are not resolved first and foremost to extirpate the habits and presuppositions of secular modernity from within ourselves. What we call the "culture war" is, after all, only one outward manifestation of a spiritual war that is being waged at all times and in all places, but whose first battleground is the heart. We have become, all of us, so accustomed to thinking like modern men and women, to believing that it is the power of the arbitrary in ourselves and in others that defines for us at once our dignity and our political freedom, that we may lack the moral resources necessary to alter the course of our culture, or even to frame intelligible arguments for wishing to do so. If we are serious Christians, or Jews, or even virtuous pagans (assuming any still exist), we should know that mere libertarian license is as often as not quite nefarious in its employment and its effects, and that our political rights are the products of a charter agreed upon for the common good (nothing more or less), and that we have no rights at all not wedded to responsibilities and to the moral claim of our neighbors upon us. Even when we know all this, we probably do not know it deeply enough.

And if we insist on being moderns, or Americans, or democrats, or consumers first, rather than Christians, Jews, and virtuous pagans above all, whose spiritual loyalties transcend all other associations, and if we allow ourselves to believe that true freedom is anything other than the liberation and perfection of a definite nature in conformity with the highest Good—with God Himself, that is—then we will always be divided against ourselves, and will be to some degree accomplices of those very forces whose defeat we think we desire. Indeed, we cannot really affect the course of the nation at all, or even properly imagine what kind of political or social future we should want, so long as we fail to remember (and to fashion our lives according to the knowledge) that we exist only because there is One who has called us from nothingness to be what He desires us to be, not simply what we would like to make ourselves, and that we shall truly be free—and know what freedom is—only when we have no choices left. FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Greener Grasses

So heed me now, though all my quondam whispers rise
From darknesses and little deaths You did despise
Or seemed to. Your tremendous volte-face preyed each year
Upon my gullibility to bend Your ear
And racked this ruined soul with frames of phantom guilt.
Your accidental turning broke the barns I built
To store, unrealized, the mildewed fruit I bore.
I listened and ran bleating to Your closing door.
But when You turned I never saw Your fabled smile
But wept upon Your thorny brow, to lose my guile
Where rivulets of blood do still obscure Your eyes
And gather where my hopes and weathered dreaming dies.
But here I lie, and ever did I, catlike, do.
For once, I now remember, where the olives grew
With mists between the small hills and dawn on the felled
Ancient castellations of the marches, You held
My eyes and opened them on glimpses of Your face.
And have You changed? Is this why now there is no trace?
But now I think I mind a moonlit path I walked
Where all the trees were dancing with Your voice and talked
Between themselves and lifted their long-fingered praise.
And You stopped me like a traveller with Your gaze
And bade me lift this old, old burden from my back.
You have not changed. But surely I must learn my lack.
Then other places where Your love drew near, precious
And strong, or weeping and long, like milestones, conscious
Of me, spread along these dusts. I pine in my sleep,
Now. Now Your mercies crowd upon me from some deep
And dead forgotten cavern of my wayward heart.
I am the lost sheep. But no sooner do we start
Back on the pasture than I stray among the rocks
Or bandy words with, here, a wolf or, there, a fox.
Brand my hide with Your blood-red love, sacred shepherd.
Teach me the strong timbre of Your speech that, once heard,
Will ever be obeyed. And lead me, lead me now,
To grasses greener, sweeter than the heart knows how.

Sean O'Neill

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Prodigal's Father

I husbanded my flocks and fields with care,
attentive to the details, great and small:
from hundredfold increase to sparrow's fall.
Perhaps I seemed neglectful to my heir,
my younger son. Though piqued by his demands,
I held my peace, not mentioning the rule
that sudden riches will destroy a fool,
and meekly parceled out his goods and lands,
and sent him on his way. I could preempt
a greater loss releasing him: among
my people, such temerities of the young
have provoked their elder brothers' fierce contempt.
Cain's toward Abel grew to wrath; should I,
like Adam, lose both sons? Heaven forbid.
Better, I thought, to sacrifice a kid
and trust that, in seraglio or in sty,
grace would find and keep him. By my beard,
he was pigheaded. But I prayed and watched
until I saw him, starving and debauched,
a long way off where he had disappeared.
Thanks be to God! I rose at once and sped
to welcome him. So much unsaid, undone;
and now, a second chance to love my son
as though we both had risen from the dead!

Bill Daugherty

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books in Review

Dramatist of Forgiveness

THE AGE OF SHAKESPEARE. By FRANK KERMODE. *Modern Library. 214 pp. $21.95.*

SHAKESPEARE. By MICHAEL WOOD. *Basic. 352 pp. $29.95.*

THE TRIAL OF MAN: CHRISTIANITY AND JUDGMENT IN THE WORLD OF SHAKESPEARE. By CRAIG BERNTHAL. *ISI. 316 pp. $25.*

Reviewed by Edward T. Oakes

UNLIKE ITS ENGLISH and American counterparts, Scottish law allows three verdicts in criminal trials: innocent, guilty, and not proven. Several years ago, amateur Shakespeareans convoked moot courts in this country to decide who wrote Shakespeare's plays: Was it the man from Stratford, or was it somebody else, perhaps Edward de Vere, the seventeenth Earl of Oxford (though he inconveniently died before the real Shakespeare had finished writing about a fifth of his plays)? In one such trial, Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens voted for the fustian Earl, a decision that should not surprise anyone familiar with his constitutional jurisprudence.

In any event, the renowned literary critic Frank Kermode, after having published a fine study titled *Shakespeare's Language*, has turned his attention to the historical setting of Shakespeare's life in *The Age of Shakespeare*, and he resolutely (and rightly, in my opinion) refuses to deal with the authorship "debate," which has become a kind of *Da Vinci Code* for amateur Elizabethans, an *X-Files* for eggheads.

Kermode does, however, pay attention to a genuine debate that has been raging recently among Elizabethan historians: Was Shakespeare a Catholic? Sticking strictly to the forensic standard of proof beyond reasonable doubt, he renders his firm verdict: not proven. He certainly makes clear how circumstantial is the evidence for Shakespeare's personal attachment to his parents' faith. Kermode admits the strong Catholic connections of the Ardens (Shakespeare's mother's family) as well as the illegal and highly dangerous hospitality proffered to the Jesuit Edmund Campion by Shakespeare's father. And he concedes that Shakespeare's favorite daughter Susanna seems to have stayed Catholic, at least up until her marriage to a Puritan physician, John Hall. As for the rest, Kermode cannot resist pointing out how those who argue for Shakespeare's Catholicism must invoke diffident phrases like "might have" and "may well have"; and when they use intimidating words like "surely" and "doubtless," their evidence proves, on close examination, to be wispy at best.

Be that is it may, one finishes reading this pleasantly written book with a strong sense of how very much we do know about the man and his background (especially the social and economic background of both the plots of the plays and the institution of the theater), even if Shakespeare's personal opinions continue to elude us; and an evening spent with this vigorously lucid book will set it all out before the eager and curious reader.

WHERE KERMODE fears to tread, Michael Wood barges right in. In his new *Shakespeare*, he argues that if both Shakespeare's father and Shakespeare's daughter were Catholic, then the conduit through which the forbidden Catholic faith traveled from grandfather to granddaughter must have been William (although, given William's extensive absences from home to keep his company stocked with plays, Susanna's mother would seem to be a likelier candidate for the role of secret, seditious catechist). Wood's book is the lushly illustrated companion to his BBC/PBS television series *In Search of Shakespeare*, and viewers who have seen his earlier ventures for public television, *In Search of Lost Troy* and *In Search of Alexander*, already know of his irrepressible enthusiasm and will not be surprised that he goes in search of Shakespeare's Catholicism like a *60 Minutes* reporter on the prowl for a scandal.

More than once (in fact, repeatedly), Wood calls Elizabethan England a "police state," and he stresses, far more than Kermode does, how dangerous life was for a dramatist, Catholic or otherwise, during Elizabeth's neurotic and anxiety-ridden reign. One day, Shakespeare's company put on a performance of *Richard II* (about the overthrow of a hopelessly incompetent monarch) for the Earl of Essex. This turned out to be the eve of Essex's abortive attempt to depose the queen. When Elizabeth got wind of this performance, the company found itself in hot water; but actors are nothing if not chameleons, and it seems they got off with merely a fine. Wood also

EDWARD T. OAKES, S.J. *is coeditor, with David Moss, of* The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar, *forthcoming in the Fall of 2004 from Cambridge University Press.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reports—a fascinating detail—that the famous Jesuit poet Robert Southwell was William's distant cousin and penned a sharp remonstrance addressed to one "W. S." (presumably his cousin William) that rebuked W. S. for his worldly outlook (this was just after Shakespeare had published his erotic masterpiece, *Venus and Adonis*).

No one would dispute Shakespeare's worldliness, if by that one means a wide acquaintance with the ways of the world, for in that regard Shakespeare stands unrivalled in literature—Homer, Dante, and Dostoevsky very much included. But Southwell's complaint was much more personal than that. Otherwise he would be attacking his cousin for possessing a writer's supreme virtue, which is knowledge of the world. For Southwell, however, only a forthright willingness to be martyred for the Catholic cause counts before God (he was himself martyred by Elizabeth's government, and with appalling gruesomeness). Wood points out that Southwell's remonstrance hardly makes sense except as the lament of a zealous Catholic bemoaning the caution of a Catholic kinsman who is ambitious and decidedly wary.

So who is right, Kermode or Wood? My own view is that Shakespeare was such an effective dramatic ventriloquist that no one knows what he privately thought about any important issue, most especially religion and politics. The famous political philosopher Leo Strauss once wrote a book called *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, which proposed that in dangerous times major authors speak in a kind of code known only to initiates (and perhaps to those equipped with a special decoder ring and a diploma from the University of Chicago). Whether that holds for such diverse writers as Aristophanes, Plato, and Maimonides (as Strauss claimed) is arguable, but of Shakespeare I would definitely say it applies. Not only were his times exceedingly dangerous (although in calling England a police state Wood exaggerates, as he does on other matters throughout the book), but Shakespeare was also astonishingly skilled at mimicking voices and adopting personae, good and evil, as his own.

CRAIG BERNTHAL IN *The Trial of Man* takes a different approach to the question of Shakespeare's religion: he investigates the trial scenes in the plays, in order to show that Shakespeare held views on justice and jurisprudence shared by all Elizabethans, irrespective of religion. Now, views shared by everyone in a particular age are best seen when they contrast with our own, and here the contrast between Shakespeare's time and ours could not be starker:

> The prevailing theory of law in our time is that the law is rational, utilitarian, and secular. Legislators create rules to accomplish policy objectives. Laws are the instruments used to promote the finite, material interests of particular groups and individuals. Judges, in reaching decisions, use legal precedents to solve problems, not to propound universal truths or to make the will of God explicit. Laws are evaluated not with respect to any universal standard of right and wrong, but by workability.

Bernthal points out that every single author who wrote on the law in Shakespeare's time held a very different view. For Elizabethans, positive law derives from natural law, which itself flows from the divine will. This

The Institute of Sacred Music at Yale University

with an outstanding faculty of Catholic and Protestant scholars and the resources and facilities of one of the world's finest research universities

Yale Divinity School
Master of Arts in Religion • Master of Divinity
Master of Sacred Theology

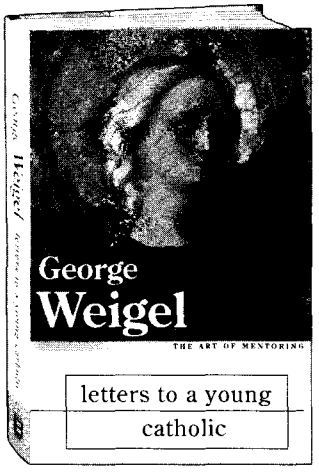
Yale School of Music
Master of Music • Artist Diploma
Master of Musical Arts • Doctor of Musical Arts

DOUBLE MAJORS MAY BE OBTAINED THROUGH THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC. JOINT DEGREES ARE OFFERED CONCURRENTLY WITH YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL. PRIZES IN ORGAN PERFORMANCE AND CHORAL CONDUCTING ARE AVAILABLE FOR QUALIFIED APPLICANTS.

YALE INSTITUTE OF SACRED MUSIC
409 Prospect Street New Haven, CT 06511 (203) 432-5180 www.yale.edu/ism

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

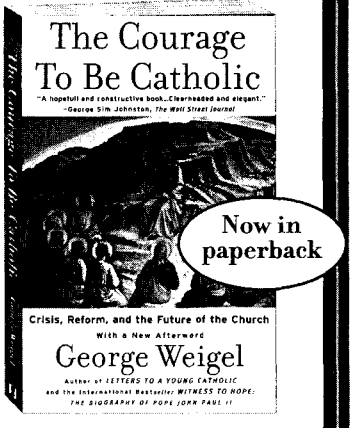
New from George Weigel



LETTERS TO A YOUNG CATHOLIC

The most personal work yet from one of America's leading commentators on religion. Weigel conveys the power of a faith that is at once personal and universal, timely and eternal.

"Weigel embarks on an extraordinary journey to the building blocks of Catholic faith."
—*The Catholic Review*



THE COURAGE TO BE CATHOLIC
Crisis, Reform, and the Future of the Church
With a new afterword

"A hopeful and constructive book... Clearheaded and elegant."
—George Sim Johnston,
The Wall Street Journal

BASIC BOOKS
A Member of the Perseus Books Group
www.basicbooks.com

means above all that a just verdict in a human court must in some way reflect, and be validated by, the divine verdict; and when the two diverge, divine judgment waits in the wings and will not ultimately be stayed or thwarted. For example, in one of his sermons, "A Remedy Against Sorrow and Fear," the great Anglican divine Richard Hooker asserts (in the kind of superb prose that the Elizabethans seem always to have ready at hand):

> The judgments of God do not always follow crimes as thunder doth lightning, but sometimes the space of many ages comes between.... [But even if sinners] chance to escape clearly in this world, which they seldom do, in the day when the heavens shall shrivel as a scroll and the mountains move as frightened men out of their places, what cave shall receive them then? What mountains or rock shall they get, by entreaty, to fall on them? What covert to hide them from that wrath, which they shall neither be able to abide nor avoid?

Shakespeare signals his agreement with these claims when he has Hamlet expostulate in these terms:

> In the corrupted currents of this world
> Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,
> And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
> Buys out the law: but 'tis not so above;
> There is no shuffling, there the action lies
> In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,
> Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
> To give in evidence.

In other words, Elizabethan legal philosophy knew that a corruption of the principles of the law in the name of expediency would be ruinous, sooner or later. The great Puritan philosopher of empiricism, Francis Bacon, put it this way in his essay "Of Judicature" (1612): "One foul sentence [from the court] doth more hurt than many foul examples [of crimes]; for these do but corrupt the stream, the other corrupteth the fountain." (Justices on our Supreme Court might spend their time more profitably with this text than with showboating sessions on moot courts deciding issues of Elizabethan literary history that are beyond their competence.)

SO HOW DOES ALL of this apply to the plays? In the first volume of *Theo-Drama*, the Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar makes this large claim: "The real dramatist of forgiveness is and remains Shakespeare." One imagines that Bernthal would agree, provided we first amend the line by saying that the real dramatist of justice is and remains Shakespeare. For after all, mercy is "parasitic" on justice, just as forgiveness piggybacks on judgment—not in the sense that mercy eats away at justice or that forgiveness destroys true judgment (although that can happen when one is too ready to forgive, as if no real offense had taken place). Rather, mercy and forgiveness have no meaning unless the fault or crime for which one is seeking forgiveness or mercy is first acknowledged before an objective and fair tribunal.

A mercy that short-circuits justice by intervening before a just verdict has been rendered is no mercy at all, merely a cleverly (and insidiously) disguised injustice, as when certain unctuous clergymen preemptively announce that they have "forgiven" Osama bin Laden even as he continues to call for holy war and to evade justice. As Shakespeare himself puts it: "Mercy is not itself that oft looks so; pardon is still the nurse of second woe." In other words, for Bernthal

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(who is both a lawyer and a professor of English) Shakespeare's God very much resembles St. Anselm's: a God whose mercy is perfectly expressed in His justice, and His justice in His mercy.

But while that might hold true theologically, Shakespeare was too good an observer of human affairs to be unaware of the human habit (or rather folly) of pretending to know just what divine justice and divine mercy precisely entail. (His contemporary Francis Bacon, for example, could pen lucid sentences on jurisprudence, but as a high official in the court of James I he confessed to bribery and corruption, and retired in disgrace.) Consider Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, which has recently been much discussed for its supposed Catholicizing tendencies.

In his book *Hamlet in Purgatory*, English professor Stephen Greenblatt has argued that Shakespeare's choice of Wittenberg as the place where Hamlet spent time as a student before his father's death cannot be mere whim; for in Wittenberg the young prince would have imbibed Martin Luther's theology of justification, including his critique of the dogma of purgatory. Back in Denmark (a Lutheranized country by the time the play was written around 1600), Hamlet encounters his father's ghost, who describes himself as "doomed *for a certain term* to walk the night / and for the day confined to *fast in fires* / till the foul crimes done in my days of nature / are burnt and *purged* away" (emphases added). The budding Lutheran prince is thus jolted out of his Wittenberg theology—but not enough to trust the ghost right away, for the Protestant critique of purgatory still holds sway in his impressionable mind. Rather, he tests the authenticity of the ghost's claim—that he was poisoned by his brother Claudius—by putting on a playlet, "The Mousetrap," to catch the conscience of the new king; and only when Hamlet suspects Claudius is going to give himself away in the next scene does he tell Ophelia, "get thee to a nunnery."

Greenblatt's interpretation sounds plausible, I admit. But Bernthal says, in effect: not so fast. What is most striking for him is that Hamlet submits the ghost to a theological or metaphysical test (Is it real?) but not to a *moral* analysis (What kind of being would order me to kill my uncle?): "How much more hellish will King Hamlet's time in purgatory be for encouraging a sin of the most serious kind?" Bernthal asks. "And what kind of father would want to

Discover an interdisciplinary Catholic journal for serious readers

Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture *provides thought-provoking and spiritually stimulating articles you will return to again and again. From The Lord of the Rings to Galileo, our subject matter will interest and inspire you. Subscriptions start at $28.*

Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture
2115 Summit Ave., Mail 55-S
St. Paul, MN 55105-1096
Phone: (800) 328-6819, Ext. 2-5703
E-mail: Logos@stthomas.edu
Subscribe online at www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/logos

UNIVERSITY of ST. THOMAS
MINNESOTA

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

put his son's soul in danger by persuading him to commit such a sin?" Moreover, when the prince is finally convinced of the ghost's authenticity, he refrains from killing Claudius; finding him praying, the prince backs off, lest he kill Claudius at a repentant moment and thereby send him to heaven. What kind of Christian, Bernthal asks, would deliberately send someone to hell while calling himself a Christian?

Nor has Claudius really given himself away by swooning during "The Mousetrap." To the best of my knowledge, Bernthal is the first and only critic to point out that Hamlet has written his little play to *guarantee* some strong reaction from Claudius, even if Claudius were not old Hamlet's killer. Yes, the audience may know that Hamlet's uncle killed the rightful king; but young Hamlet doesn't know that at all. To find out is, he says, his whole reason for staging "The Mousetrap." But curiously enough, what he presents is a play that seems designed to prevent him from finding out. "In Hamlet's play it is a *nephew*, Lucianus, who murders his uncle, Gonzago. Claudius, even if he were innocent, would have every right, given Hamlet's erratic behavior, to take this as a barely veiled threat. Since Claudius's reaction to 'The Mousetrap' could verify either of two hypotheses, it ultimately fails to reveal the truth."

To complicate matters even further, the audience, too, must render judgment. If "The Mousetrap" was Hamlet's way of capturing the conscience of but one king, all of Shakespeare's plays are "trial scenes" of a sort; that is, they are Shakespeare's way of trapping audiences into rendering a "verdict." At the close of *The Tempest*, for example, Shakespeare, with a self-consciousness about the theatrical arts typical of much of his writing, even engages in a witty riff on the Catholic belief in indulgences: Prospero appeals to his "jury," the audience, to judge the play not according to its poor "merits" but by the audience's merciful "indulgence," that is, by its benign, all-forgiving applause:

> And my ending is despair
> Unless I be relieved by prayer,
> Which pierces so that it assaults
> Mercy itself and frees all faults.
> As you from crimes would
> pardoned be,
> Let your indulgence set me free.

Audiences are always complicit in plays, and in no plays more than in Shakespeare's. I have seen productions of *The Merchant of Venice* that make Shylock an oily misanthrope and deliberately play up the anti-Semitic tropes of medieval and Renaissance Europe, and others where Portia seems to be cynically mouthing mercy while Shylock actually embodies it (or at least justice). And Shakespeare notoriously left the ending of *Measure for Measure* up to the director. That play revolves around a man in late-medieval Vienna whom the viceroy of the absent Duke sentences to death for fornication. The man's sister, who has just entered a convent, comes to plead for mercy for her brother; and the viceroy promises amnesty only if she will bed with him. Unbeknownst to the viceroy, the Duke is back in town (disguised as a monk, of course) and the "monk" arranges for this illegal tryst to be kept not by the condemned man's sister but by a fiancée whom the viceroy had previously jilted; thus the viceroy will be caught in fornication himself, while the sister's virtue will be preserved.

At the end all is revealed, the viceroy marries his fiancée, the convicted fornicator marries the woman he had violated, who was, after all, his intended spouse—and the Duke, doffing his monk's robe, proposes marriage to the novice nun. Having hotly refused the viceroy earlier (much to the consternation of her brother), does she accept the Duke's almost equally impertinent offer? The play doesn't say, for it ends there. A director may have her walk off in a huff or take his hand while the curtain falls; I have seen it staged both ways (and both leave a rather unpleasant taste in the mouths of spectators).

So who knows what Shakespeare's religious convictions were? No one, probably. But at least Kermode, Wood, and Bernthal can confirm this historical fact: he knew his theology, Catholic and Protestant. What audiences and readers make of that, it seems, is up to them. I predict that this debate on Shakespeare's religion (just like that on his politics) will never be resolved. That's the great advantage of being in the theater: people never know for sure what to think of you.

"Austin Farrer...possibly the greatest Anglican mind of the twentieth century."
— Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury

CAPTURED BY THE CRUCIFIED

A Conference and Spiritual Life Workshop Celebrating Austin Farrer's
Lived Theology in the Centenary Year of His Birth

November 4-7, 2004

The St. James Center for Spiritual Formation at St. James Episcopal Church
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

PRESENTERS INCLUDE: David Brown, Van Mildert Professor of Divinity, University of Durham; Ann Loades, CBE, Professor of Divinity, University of Durham; Diogenes Allen, Princeton Theological Seminary; David Hein, Hood College

For registration and additional program information, contact:

www.stjamescsf.org

St. James Center for Spiritual Formation
P.O. Box 126, Baton Rouge, LA 70821
Ph. 225-387-5141 — Fax 225-387-1443

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

No Bill of Lading

LINCOLN'S EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION: THE END OF SLAVERY IN AMERICA. By ALLEN C. GUELZO. *Simon & Schuster. 332 pp. $26.*

Reviewed by George McKenna

ABRAHAM LINCOLN freed the slaves. Or so I was taught in grade school. Later, of course, I became much more knowledgeable and sophisticated. I learned that Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation applied only to areas in actual rebellion against the Union—places not in control of federal forces. I learned that William Seward, Lincoln's own Secretary of State, had dismissed the Emancipation Proclamation as "a puff of wind . . . emancipating slaves where we cannot reach them and holding them in bondage where we can set them free." I read historian Richard Hofstadter's famous observation that the Proclamation "had all the moral grandeur of a bill of lading" and "did not in fact free any slaves."

Now, as the subtitle of his study of the Emancipation Proclamation suggests, Allen C. Guelzo seems ready to affirm that my boyhood understanding was right after all.

Guelzo lays out his case methodically in *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America*, first showing us Lincoln's underlying principles, then the way he applied them in the rapidly shifting landscape between 1861 and 1865. What was fixed and unalterable in Lincoln was his conviction that slavery was a grave moral evil that should be put "in the course of ultimate extinction." This is platitudinous today (except in parts of Africa) but it certainly was not in antebellum America. Probably only a minority accepted the argument of slavery apologists such as George Fitzhugh and John C. Calhoun that slavery was a positive good, but a more common view was that slavery as a moral issue ought to be kept out of national public debate. In his famous 1858 debates with Lincoln, Stephen A. Douglas played to this view, charging that it was fatuous, if not mischievous, for Lincoln to drag this moral issue (he also called it a "religious" issue) into the national public arena: "I do not discuss the morals of the people of Missouri, but let them settle the matter for themselves." Lincoln not only stuck to his position but put it at the very center of the debate. "The real issue in this controversy," he said, is "the sentiment on the part of one class that looks upon the institution of slavery *as a wrong*, and another class that *does not* look upon it as a wrong."

Throughout his public career, Lincoln never left any doubt about where he stood on the issue. In 1837, as a young Illinois legislator, he and another member denounced slavery as an institution "founded on injustice and bad policy." In 1849, as a one-term congressman, he proposed abolishing it in the District of Columbia, and in 1854 he began publicly honing the moral case against slavery that he used against Douglas in 1858.

IF HE FELT SO STRONGLY about slavery, why didn't he abolish it at once when he took office, instead of waiting two years and then abolishing it only in the areas of actual rebellion? Guelzo offers a number of reasons, including Lincoln's modest view of presidential authority in civil affairs (as opposed to his plenary concept of "war powers"), and his concern that the Supreme Court of Roger Taney—author of the *Dred Scott* decision—would pounce on any presidential proclamation freeing slaves that was not very narrowly tailored. But the most persuasive reason Guelzo offers is that an immediate, sweeping proclamation would have cost Lincoln the support of the border states—and thus the Union. Seven slaveowning states had already seceded by the time Lincoln was sworn into office on March 4, 1861, and in April another four followed. Four slaveowning states, Missouri, Delaware, Maryland, and Kentucky, still remained in the Union, but Kentucky declared itself to be in a "position of strict neutrality" and two of the other three were very shaky. (Legislation affirming loyalty to the Union had passed in the Maryland legislature very narrowly, and in Missouri the governor and legislature were divided.) If these loyal, or semi-loyal, states ever heard that Lincoln was planning to free "their" slaves by decree, the game would have been up. Kentucky would have tipped first, Lincoln thought, then Missouri, and then Maryland, which bordered on the District of Columbia.

"These all against us, and the job on our hands is too large for us," Lincoln said. "We would as well consent to separation at once, including the surrender of this capitol." These were not imaginary fears. Already in Maryland, slaves were escaping into Union camps, and when their outraged Unionist owners showed up to demand their return under the Fugitive Slave Law, Union soldiers, "practicing a little of the abolition system," as one complainant put it, rudely turned them away. If you are going to treat us like rebels, the Marylanders threatened, we might as well be rebels. The same complaints were surfacing in other loyal slaveholding states, and Lincoln was forced to assure Senator Garrett Davis of Kentucky that he would do nothing to threaten "the institutions or property" of any loyal state. "Professed Unionists," Lincoln confessed, gave him "more trouble than rebels."

Whatever his desires about the

GEORGE MCKENNA *is Professor of Political Science at City College of New York and author of* The Drama of Democracy *(1994).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

future of slavery, Lincoln had taken an oath on March 4, 1861, to "preserve, defend, and protect the Constitution of the United States." By that day, seven slaveowning states of the Deep South had torn up the Constitution; in the next month another four would do the same. Lincoln's "paramount" duty, he wrote to *New York Tribune* editor Horace Greeley, was to restore it. "If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that."

Lincoln's focus on saving the Union was in no way incompatible with his desire to end slavery. First of all, if the Union were not preserved, if the South were allowed to go its own way and do its own thing, all hopes for ending slavery in the foreseeable future would be ended. Second, Lincoln left open a radical option ("if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves I would do it") while hinting at what he was then planning to do in his Emancipation Proclamation ("freeing some and leaving others alone"). Third, Lincoln had never given up the idea, which he had first broached in 1855, of voluntary and compensated emancipation. He brought it up again in the fall of 1861, hoping to make tiny Delaware a laboratory to demonstrate its success and encourage other states to try it, and in 1862 he persuaded Congress to pass legislation extending the offer to all loyal states, but even this voluntary proposal produced a storm of indignation over interference in "states' rights." Its Delaware sponsors dropped it when the votes weren't there for final passage, and none of the other border states showed any interest in it. At his most cautious, then, Lincoln was still far ahead of most other white Americans in moving toward the abolition of slavery.

What Lincoln could do unilaterally, as he understood it, was to use his military power as commander-in-chief to deprive the rebels of the slaves they were using to grow their crops. Yet he wanted to give the rebel areas an opportunity to return to the Union on their own. On September 22, 1862, he issued a Preliminary Proclamation, setting a deadline of January 1, 1863, for a return to the Union. If the areas in rebellion failed to comply by that date, their slaves would be "thenceforward and forever free." The armed services were ordered to protect and maintain "the freedom of such persons" and to do nothing to repress them "in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom." This last phrase set off a new uproar, even in the North, because it was viewed as an incitement to bloody slave rebellions. According to one Boston "moderate," it would make the slaves think that they "should be made free by killing or poisoning their masters and mistresses." In the Final Proclamation of January 1, 1863, Lincoln enjoined the slaves "to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defense"; but this tacitly left open other means of self-liberation, including simply running away, which is what Lincoln hoped they would do.

The Final Proclamation made good on the ultimatum Lincoln had delivered in his Preliminary Proclamation one hundred days earlier: "I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States, and parts of States, are, and henceforward shall be, free; and that the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons." The night before issuing it, Lincoln was getting last-minute telegraphic reports on the "parts of states" that had come under federal control. Referring to them, the Proclamation said, "These excepted parts are, for the present, left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued." Hence Seward's jibe about Lincoln's "emancipating slaves where we cannot reach them and holding them in bondage where we can set them free." (An editorialist in the London *Times* compared it to "a Chinaman beating his two swords together to frighten his enemy.")

But Guelzo gives us reason to

The Humor of Kierkegaard
AN ANTHOLOGY
Edited and introduced by Thomas C. Oden

Who might reasonably be nominated as the funniest philosopher of all time? With this anthology, Thomas Oden provisionally declares Søren Aabye Kierkegaard —despite his enduring stereotype as the melancholy, despairing Dane—as the most amusing. This collection shows how his theory of comedy is integrated into his practice of comic perception, and how both are integral to his entire authorship.

"Not only does this book make Kierkegaard accessible but it also entertains, regales with story, and amuses."—David J. Gouwens, Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University

Paper $16.95 ISBN 0-691-02085-X Cloth $55.00 ISBN 0-691-07406-2 Due June

PRINCETON University Press 800-777-4726 • READ EXCERPTS ONLINE WWW.PUP.PRINCETON.EDU

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

believe that this was no empty gesture. He quotes a Union officer in Virginia who saw slaves running into his camp from as far away as North Carolina; this officer said they "know all about the Proclamation and they started on the belief in it." Many slaves themselves later named the Proclamation as the instrument that motivated them to escape. "When the Proclamation was issued," one told a congressional committee, that was when he decided to flee his master. Another said, "I have been a slave from my childhood up to the time I was set free by the emancipation proclamation." In the summer of 1863, a Union officer noticed among "the negroes" a very different attitude from former times. He attributed it to the Proclamation: "a spirit of independence—a feeling they are no longer slaves." It is hard to keep people in slavery when they no longer think of themselves as slaves.

THERE IS MUCH MORE about Lincoln in Guelzo's book, including his promotion of the Thirteenth Amendment, his use of black troops in the war, and his support for at least selective black suffrage at its conclusion. Indeed, we probably learn more about Lincoln in this book than we need to, given its limited scope. Guelzo reprises his earlier speculations about Lincoln's religiosity (*Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President*, 1999; reviewed in FT August 2000), portraying him as "a kind of secularized Calvinist" who feigned religiosity for political reasons until the summer of 1862, when the deepening crisis finally caused him to think seriously about God's purposes. (For a different and better supported view, see Joseph R. Fornieri, *Abraham Lincoln's Political Faith*, 2003). Even within its scope one finds some rhetorical overkill in a few places. In one passage, for example, Guelzo replies to Richard Hofstadter's wisecrack about the Emancipation Proclamation having "all the moral grandeur of a bill of lading"—by defending bills of lading. Wisely, he consigns that to a footnote.

Nevertheless, Guelzo presents a well-documented account of a president who stretched his powers as far as the Constitution and the climate of the times permitted in order to set the nation on a course leading to what he had hoped for many years earlier: the "ultimate extinction" of slavery. I do not know whether that is still taught in our public schools. Guelzo makes a persuasive case that it should be.

Landscapes with Angels

Fantasy, Children's Literature and the Spiritual Role of the Imagination

A Summer Conference in Oxford, England

August 12-15, 2004

Today's youth are receiving metaphysical and moral instruction through the imaginative "other worlds" of literary works like *The Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter*. This genre, deeply rooted in British culture, will be explored and celebrated in the historic setting of Oxford's largest college, Christ Church.

Speakers include: **Stratford and Léonie Caldecott** on Tolkien's Elvish England, **Owen Dudley Edwards** on the Celtic Fairy-World, **Vigen Guroian** on Peter Pan and Mowgli, **Tom Howard** on Towers and Wardrobes, **Dwight Longenecker** on the Way of the Hero, **Carol and Philip Zaleski** on Faith Seeking Understanding through Fantasy. Banquet in Christ Church's Great Hall, with special guest **Barbara Reynolds**. Inklings Tour of Oxford with **Walter Hooper**.

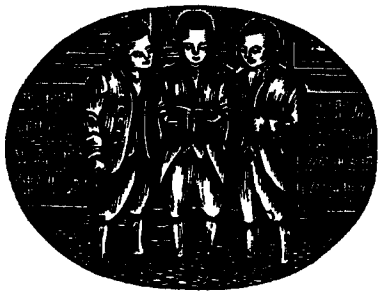
For more information, visit *www.secondspring.co.uk/fantasy*, or contact *s_caldecott@yahoo.co.uk* or *nourseda@shu.edu*

The G.K. Chesterton Institute for Faith & Culture at Seton Hall University and Oxford

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY 1856

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LOOME THEOLOGICAL BOOKSELLERS



When you next visit the Twin Cities, remember to include Stillwater in your itinerary (we are 30 minutes by car from downtown St. Paul, 40 minutes from the airport).

We have two large bookstores in Stillwater, our newest being *Loome Antiquarian Booksellers*, among the largest scholarly secondhand bookshops in North America, with outstanding collections in literature and literary criticism, history, children's books, cookery, natural history & science, mathematics, military history, law & economics, music, art, fine bindings and a breathtaking array of maps, prints, engravings, and leaves of mediaeval manuscripts.

Loome Antiquarian Booksellers
201 South Main Street
Stillwater, MN 55082
Phone: 651-430-9805
Email: Books@Loomebooks.com
Website: www.Loomebooks.com

Please contact us either at our new store or at our long established:

Loome Theological Booksellers
320 North Fourth Street
Stillwater, MN 55082
Phone: 651-430-1092
Fax: 651-439-8504
Email: books@loomebooks.com
Website: www.loomebooks.com

As always, we will travel anywhere to purchase good books. We hope to hear from you soon.

LOOME ANTIQUARIAN BOOKSELLERS

How Murder Became Policy

THE ORIGINS OF THE FINAL SOLUTION: THE EVOLUTION OF NAZI JEWISH POLICY, SEPTEMBER 1939-MARCH 1942. By CHRISTOPHER R. BROWNING with a contribution by JÜRGEN MATTHÄUS. *University of Nebraska Press and Yad Vashem. 615 pp. $39.95.*

Reviewed by
William D. Rubinstein

HOW, WHEN, AND why the Nazis' decision to exterminate Europe's Jews was made remains one of the most vexed and disputed of all important questions concerning the Holocaust. There was not simply an order from Hitler commanding the killing of the Jews, and there is general agreement that the genocide evolved in stages, steadily becoming more comprehensive. *The Origins of the Final Solution* by the universally respected historian Christopher R. Browning, now at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is a magisterial examination of this subject in the wider context of the overall evolution of Nazi policy towards the Jews between the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 and the opening of the first extermination camps early in 1942.

Browning's massive but highly readable work (some parts of which were written by the German scholar Jürgen Matthäus) covers every aspect of this question and incorporates all significant previous research. While new interpretations are, of course, likely to be offered in the future, it is most unlikely, barring the discovery of new documents of great importance, that we will ever have a clearer picture of this process than the one Browning offers. This is not to say that the evolution of Nazi policy towards the Jews in this period is now crystal clear—it emphatically is not—but it is to say that all the evidence that an historian can bring to bear on this question has now been synthesized in the clearest form it is ever likely to have.

TO THOSE WHOSE knowledge of the Holocaust consists, essentially, of the fact that Hitler killed the Jews, it often comes as a surprise to learn that, in the first seven and a half years of Nazi rule in Germany, he did no such killing: Jews were not deliberately murdered by the Nazi regime until the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. In Karl Schleunes' famous phrase, there was a "twisted road to Auschwitz," with a gradual but by no means direct path to continental genocide. For the first few years of Nazi rule in Germany—Hitler came to power in January 1933 as chancellor and consolidated his rule after the death of President von Hindenburg a year later—Nazi policy aimed "merely" at the removal of Jews from positions of authority, especially in the state sector, with such removal constantly reinforced by the totalitarian regime's propaganda and its police terrorism.

While Jews began to flee abroad from the first days of the Nazi regime, only after *Kristallnacht* in November 1938 did Nazi policy switch categorically to the expulsion of all Jews from the Reich as its central aim. Although the Jews were ever-more intensively disemployed, defined as noncitizens, ostracized, stripped of wealth, brutalized, and encouraged to emigrate, they were not being killed by the government, and the majority of

WILLIAM D. RUBINSTEIN *is Professor of Modern History at the University of Wales-Aberystwyth. He is the author of* The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies Could Not Have Saved More Jews from the Nazis (1997), *and* Genocide: A History *(2004).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Germany's five hundred thousand Jews managed to escape from the country before the outbreak of the war (though not necessarily to safety, as many wound up trapped in Poland and the Soviet Union). Indeed, so effective were the Nazis at expelling the Jews from their territories that about two-thirds of Austria's two hundred thousand Jews managed to flee abroad in the short period between the German takeover of Austria in March 1938 and the closing of the borders to further Jewish emigration from the Reich in 1940-1941.

From the *Kristallnacht* pogrom onwards, Nazi policy toward the Jews radicalized relentlessly, reaching deliberate continental genocide of a kind never before seen in history by 1941-1942. It is here, however, that considerable difference of opinion among historians begins. Over the past twenty years or so, a consensus has emerged that Hitler did not embark on his campaign of killing all Jews in the Soviet Union, including women and children, immediately after the invasion began in June 1941, but only several months later. At first, it seems, only adult male Jews and "commissars" (Soviet state operatives) were killed; one of the best-known recent expositions of this viewpoint is Philippe Burrin's 1994 *Hitler and the Jews: The Genesis of the Holocaust*. Nearly all of the detailed documentation of the Holocaust, including recently discovered records, points to this conclusion. Nonetheless, by the end of 1941, Nazi killing squads (*Einsatzgruppen*) had killed hundreds of thousands of Jews in the western Soviet Union, murdering men, women, and children indiscriminately. Beginning in early 1942, the extermination camps (all located in conquered Poland) began to murder Jews, and others, brought in from all parts of Europe.

Perhaps the main area of dispute about this process concerns Hitler's precise role in ordering the killing of the Jews. Remarkably, we simply do not know, in an unequivocal way, what Hitler's precise role was. The dictator often gave oral orders to senior henchmen such as Heinrich Himmler that were never written down, and historians can only infer Hitler's precise role and intentions from evidence which is infuriatingly inadequate and contradictory. Because of the lack of unambiguous evidence, historians have been divided for decades, rather misleadingly, into so-called "intentionalists," who argue that Hitler always intended to kill the Jews, and "functionalists," who claim that the killing process somehow, as it were, welled up from local SS units in Russia until it became general Nazi policy.

It might be noted that, to a surprising extent, much about Hitler's precise knowledge of the Holocaust remains unclear. For instance, we do not know if Hitler ever saw photographs or newsreels of the killing process, or, indeed, just how comprehensive and brutally frank were Himmler's reports to Hitler. We have agendas of face-to-face meetings between Hitler and Himmler, at which the Holocaust was to be discussed, but no memorializations or minutes of such meetings. Most of the senior Nazis who were tried at Nuremberg in 1945-1946 (few of whom had any immediate involvement in the killing of Jews) had apparently never seen photographic evidence of the horrors of the concentration camps until their trials; they appeared to be genuinely shocked when newsreels of Belsen and Buchenwald were shown to the court.

Browning wrestles with these and many other related questions in a consistently persuasive and cogent way. He concludes, very sensibly, that it is inconceivable that the Holocaust, unprecedented in history and entailing a massive, counterproductive diversion of resources in wartime, could have taken place without Hitler's immediate knowledge and approval, although his orders were often, as Browning notes, "vague and inexplicit." Moreover, Hitler himself was the chief Nazi ideologue of rabid, demented, racialist anti-Semitism, with anti-Semitism at the very center

Attention
Catholic Givers

It's Time To Find Out About A
Catholic Charitable Investment Tool
That Gives You Superior Tax Advantages.

visit
www.ccfny.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of his worldview and in and of itself a central motivating factor in his foreign and military policies.

Browning also notes that the destruction of the Jews went hand-in-hand with a much wider attempt at "ethnic cleansing" throughout Eastern Europe. The Nazis had well-advanced plans, which might have been realized had they won the war, to remove by force millions of Poles and other Slavs to Siberia, with vast numbers certain to die en route. One of the major merits of Browning's book is its detailed discussion of these plans, as well as Nazi policies towards the gypsies. Browning notes, correctly, that the Nazis killed large numbers of gypsies even though Hitler hardly ever mentioned them and certainly did not have anti-gypsy hostility at the heart of his ideology. Browning also offers a detailed consideration of the Nazi program of murdering the physically and mentally handicapped among "Aryan" Germans (the "T4 program"), which began in mid-1939 and eventually claimed seventy thousand victims before it was stopped in mid-1941, and he reports that many of the killers in the T4 program went on to be directly involved with the extermination of the Jews in Eastern Europe.

Browning concludes that Hitler ordered the genocide of the Jews in the Soviet Union during the period of what he terms "euphoria" just after the invasion of Russia, when victory appeared to be easily within Germany's grasp. Browning dates this, as most recent historians do, to August-October 1941, in the context of a general "war of destruction" in the Soviet Union. Browning's timetable thus reflects today's consensus, although he does present a comprehensive array of evidence in support of this conclusion. With the failure of the German armies to gain a decisive victory in Russia, a failure that was becoming evident by October or November 1941, Nazi genocide began to turn toward the Jews under German control throughout Europe, beginning with the Jews of Poland, and employing the assembly-line techniques of the gas chambers in extermination camps like Treblinka and Auschwitz rather than the open-air shootings that the *Einsatzgruppen* invariably used during the first days of the invasion.

BROWNING'S ACCOUNT of the evolution of the Nazi genocide is the most comprehensive that has yet appeared, and it is no exaggeration to say that the author, who offers here 110 pages of endnotes, has read and absorbed every available document of relevance. Yet one must continue to wonder whether Hitler really waited until August-October 1941 to decide on a policy of genocide. Hitler habitually thought in demographic and social-Darwinist terms, and from 1939 onwards, he was confronted by a new demographic reality—that he now had many millions of Jews under his thumb, far more than the mere five hundred thousand in Nazi Germany in 1933, a figure itself ever-diminishing through emigration. With the conquest of western Poland in mid-1939, over two million Jews came under his rule, while the invasion and conquest of the Soviet Union would add another five million, entirely apart from the many Jews in Nazi satellite states such as Hungary and Romania. It is very difficult to believe that Hitler did not contemplate genocide along with the invasion of the Soviet Union, given the fact that he would soon have the ability to get rid of all of Europe's Jews in one fell swoop. As Browning carefully notes, as early as February 1941 Hitler remarked to a number of other top Nazis that towards the Jews "he was thinking of many things in a different way, not exactly more friendly."

Director of Conferences and Events

Ave Maria University in Naples, Florida is seeking a Director of Conferences and Events. The position will report to the Vice President for Institutional Advancement and is responsible for planning, designing, marketing/publicity, and execution of all AMU academic and non-academic conferences and events.

The applicant must be a leader and be committed to Catholic education, to the mission of Ave Maria University, and to translating these commitments into effective conferences and events. Qualifications also include excellent organizational, oral and written communication skills, the ability to develop and manage budgets, focus on details, set priorities and meet multiple demands. The ability to conduct program evaluation is required. Must also be able to function as part of a team and have strong team building skills. Excellent skills in Microsoft Office software and standard databases essential (working knowledge of Raiser's Edge a serious plus). Salary commensurate with experience and qualifications.

Please respond, either by fax or mail, with cover letter and resume to:

Vice President for Institutional Advancement
Ave Maria University
1025 Commons Circle
Naples, FL 34119

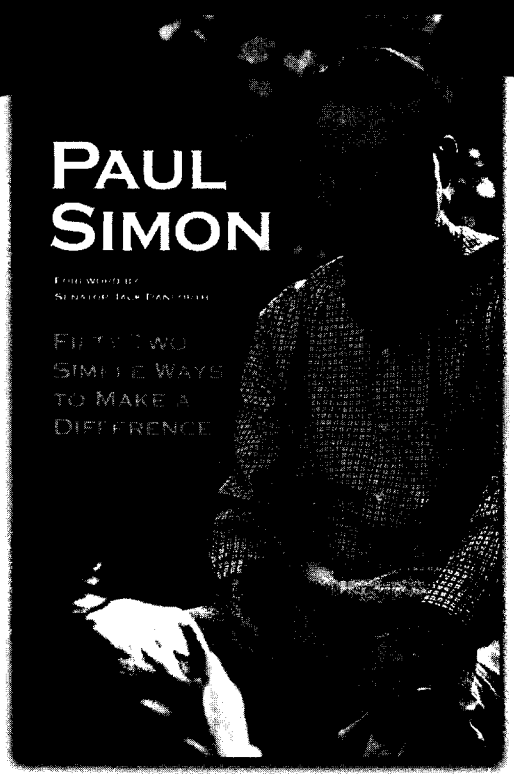
239-352-2392 (fax)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Browning also examines the much-debated question of the degree of complicity by ordinary Germans in the "Final Solution." Here he sensibly steers a middle course between those who see genocide as carried out by the top Nazis, under the smokescreen of the war, secretly and in a way almost totally hidden from Germany's civilians, and, at the other extreme, historians such as Daniel J. Goldhagen who view virtually the entire German people as complicit in "exterminationist anti-Semitism." Browning realizes the extent to which anti-Semitism, although always present in German (and, more obviously, in Austrian) culture, had nevertheless been greatly ameliorated down to 1933 by the general and continuous rise of liberalism and "modernity." But he also understands that Germany's "special path" to the twentieth century—unlike that of the English-speaking world—involved a reactionary and anti-liberal elite masterminding and benefiting from an extremely rapid industrial revolution while holding to ultranationalism and expansionism as its core values. The attitude of the average German towards the persecution of the Jews by the Nazis (that is, in Nazi Germany itself) was arguably one of reprehensible indifference; but one must not forget also that Nazi Germany was a totalitarian society, where opposition to the regime meant certain imprisonment or death, and that the Nazis kept their killings in Eastern Europe a secret from their own people.

Ultimately, one must surely conclude that the unparalleled enormities carried out by the Nazis took place because the First World War destroyed Germany's traditional elite structure, permitting, in the context of the Depression, the rise of an extremist movement at the absolute fringes of political life which would never otherwise have come to power. Almost precisely the same thing occurred, for the same reasons, in Russia with the Bolshevik revolution and the rise of Stalin to supreme power just over a decade later. In the English-speaking world, fortunately, the legacy of internalized liberalism, enhanced by the fact that its nations were victorious in the First World War and their institutions left intact, kept the traditional governing structures viable and gave radical fringe groups no opportunity to gather political power. Arguably, too, the deep wound of 1914-1918, which caused so many horrors in Europe, was not fully healed until the fall of Communism in 1990, if even then.

FIFTY-TWO SIMPLE WAYS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Shortly before his death Paul Simon completed this inspiring book filled with success stories of individuals who have made a difference in their communities and turned their own lives around.

0-8066-4678-0 paper 144 pp
$9.99 (Can. 13.50)

1-800-328-4648

Augsburg Books
AUGSBURG · FORTRESS PUBLISHERS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sinners in the Hands of a Flexible God

JESUS IN AMERICA—A HISTORY: PERSONAL SAVIOR, CULTURAL HERO, NATIONAL OBSESSION. By RICHARD WIGHTMAN FOX. *HarperSanFrancisco. 488 pp. $27.95.*

Reviewed by J. A. Gray

THE AMERICA OF the title is the United States, from colonial times to the present. The Jesus of the title is all the things the subtitle says and more. To Jesus' question "Who do you say that I am?" Americans have offered seemingly numberless and often contradictory replies. In *Jesus in America*, Richard Wightman Fox undertakes to "document the diversity"—or at least "a fair sample" thereof—while "throwing some light on basic historical patterns and particularities," and in his four hundred pages of text covering four centuries Fox manages, remarkably, to display no condescension toward the favored Jesus of any American (although he does take a sour tone toward one American, as we shall see).

"This book is for believers and nonbelievers alike. It is not a book about whether one should believe in Jesus, but about how Americans have believed in and portrayed him." To open it is to see at once that this is a popular history for the general reader, an historical narrative of "the national infatuation with Jesus," a primer on Jesus in America written in a friendly prose that undergraduates could easily handle. Fox's tone is that of a teacher inviting students to imagine sympathetically, with his expert help, how people lived and thought in times that preceded our own—specifically, Christian people, with whom Fox seems to expect the reader to have at best an imperfect sympathy. "We can overcome our blindness about others, past or present, only if we try to see and feel things as they did." Beneath this cordial classroom manner is considerable scholarship, of which readers can avail themselves in Fox's generous and well-written endnotes, which are designed also to be a guide to further reading.

In addition to a teacherly solicitude for students and an historian's enthusiasm for his subject, there is also evident here a kind of reportorial detachment (now and then as the cavalcade of personalities and religiosities passes, one thinks of Herodotus genially reporting to the Greeks about Egyptian lore). Fox "keeps his ear open" to the many voices in America's "collective cry for Christ," but frequently expresses a kind of agnosticism that may not be just a pedagogical device: "I do not know whether believers are right about Jesus' being a divine Comforter who sends them his spirit. I do think that their belief in him makes perfect sense, and I know that their belief has profoundly shaped American and world history."

Fox warns early on that because he is writing a history of American Jesuses and not of American religions, he will perforce "lean to the Protestants." Catholics, though "a major force in America from the beginning," have not contributed as heartily to the continual reconceiving of Jesus that is our national pastime. "Protestants did much more innovating in their conceptions and experiences of Jesus." Why haven't Catholics kept up? "On the whole Catholics have been satisfied that they already have complete access to the real Jesus." (That is one way of putting it, although to advert merely to felt satisfaction and lack of felt desire, with no mention of adherence to creed, submission to authority, or acceptance of magisterium, is surely to state only part of the case about Catholics.)

Fox's report is chronological, beginning with Jesus' entry into the New World with the French and Spanish missionaries and explorers. (He duly notes the Mormon claim that Jesus was here much earlier, among the Nephites.) Ensuing are one chapter on the seventeenth century, one on the eighteenth, two on the nineteenth, two on the twentieth, and a twenty-first-century epilogue, with political, economic, and demographic "intersections" pointed out as occasion warrants. The main outline of the chronicle soon becomes evident and, indeed, predictable—all sides in every debate laid claim to Jesus—but Fox's summaries of the changes rung on the Jesus theme are astute and pithy:

> As more and more eighteenth-century American Protestants embraced the born-again version of 'believing in Jesus,' Christ himself was reborn in American culture. . . . The upshot of this passionate piety was to minimize the importance of sharp boundaries between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to allow 'Jesus' to function as an umbrella term for all three. . . .
>
> Orthodox Calvinists read John 3:16 and stressed the first clause: God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. . . . Revivalists switched the emphasis to the second clause of John 3:16: believe in Jesus and you will not perish but be saved. Do what it takes to save yourself: take Jesus as your personal savior. . . .
>
> Northern abolitionists and southern slaveholders brought all their profound disagreements about selfhood and society, sin and progress, to their encounter with Jesus. Each side produced a Christ it could recognize and revere.

J. A. GRAY *is Associate Editor of* FIRST THINGS.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

So why this ceaseless Jesus-interpreting and frequent Jesus-mongering? Fox repeatedly makes the point that Americans have found Jesus uniquely useful in helping them "to embark on uncharted futures while maintaining a respectful attachment to tradition." Jesus "has tied them to their past and empowered them to leave it behind." Americans "could get divine sanction for making all things new while believing that they honored their most precious inheritance of all, Christ himself. They could see themselves as a chosen people—the ancient Hebrew notion adopted in the seventeenth century by the Puritans—but a people chosen now for free-spirited development as individuals." This theme is restated in a hundred ways, and by the hundredth time it begins to sound very much as if we are trying to have our cake and eat it, too. But Fox is ready for that complaint, affirming that we are succeeding in that proverbially self-defeating endeavor: "With Jesus as their hero Americans could have their cake of old-time values and devour it, too."

A READER FINISHING this history of America's hospitality to Jesus may find the word "Procrustean" coming to mind to describe that hospitality, but this is not at any hint from Fox, who seems quite content with our Christological free-for-all. He offers no "Christ and culture" schema in which Jesus is awarded at least the integrity of an idea or principle: the Jesus whom he chronicles here is something else, an organic part (metaphorically) of this American organism. Fox says more than once, using an image from Emerson, that Jesus is so deeply "ploughed" into our cultural soil as to be inextricable from American life. With this as his favored imagery, it is not surprising that Fox would celebrate our luxuriant crop of Jesuses. (This reader's mind inevitably goes to parables of wheat and tares, but Fox, as I say, gives no encouragement to such judgmental metaphors.)

It does seem a weakness in Fox's treatment that he never suggests whether or how we Americans can discover any shaping limitations, any integrating constraints, either inherent or derived from authority, on our Jesus-reinterpretation. Fox credits Emerson with the insight about Jesus and America that seems to be Fox's own guiding light: "As Emerson understood, Jesus is a renewable cultural figure precisely because Christians can become crit-

TWO NEW BOOKS
by Rowan Williams

THE DWELLING OF THE LIGHT
Praying with Icons of Christ

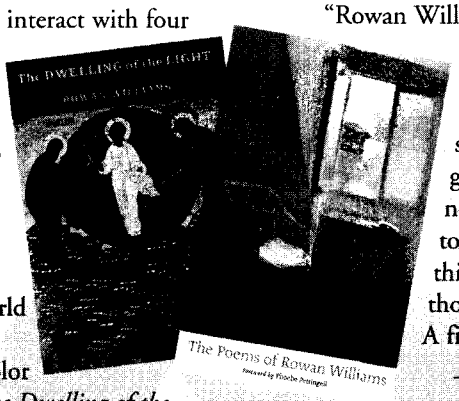
After a concise introduction that beautifully illuminates the history and role of icons in Christian worship, Rowan Williams shows readers of all Christian traditions how to understand and interact with four classical icons of Jesus: the transfiguration, the resurrection, Christ as a member of the eternal Trinity, and Christ as judge of the world and ruler of all. Illustrated in color throughout, *The Dwelling of the Light* will be a treasured source of spiritual inspiration, ideal for personal use and for giving to others.

ISBN 0-8028-2778-0 • 107 pages • hardcover • $16.00

THE POEMS OF ROWAN WILLIAMS
Foreword by **Phoebe Pettingell**

"Reading this poet, at such a period in our history, is like feeling the first drops of rain after a long season of drought." — **A. N. WILSON**

"Rowan Williams's poems are spare and compressed, slowly releasing themselves. They have great concreteness and are close to the skin of things. I admire all those qualities. . . . A fine book." — **RICHARD WILBUR**



ISBN 0-8028-2685-7 • 111 pages • paperback • $12.00

AT YOUR BOOKSTORE,
OR CALL 800-253-7521
WWW.EERDMANS.COM

4078 WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503

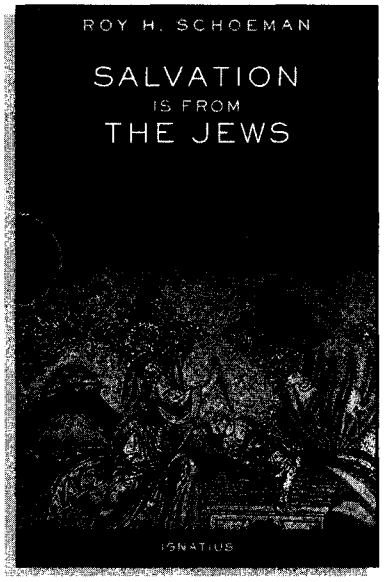
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ically aware that they have neglected or exploited him." All right, but no hint is given as to what someone who becomes "critically aware" is to do. Fox gives no explicit guidance—and properly so, as he is an historian and not a pastor—but neither does he offer any obstacle to the inference that every American is at liberty to create a new and more suitable projection of Jesus.

Is a Jesus so eminently malleable a Jesus eminently dismissible? Fox expresses no worries about Jesus' continuing to play all the roles given him in the book's subtitle. In bringing his book to a close in the present—including even some commentary on the film *The Passion of the Christ*—Fox does not confront the argument that all this Jesus-shaping has paved the way for Christianity's demise, an argument such as that of James Turner that "having made God more and more like man—intellectually, morally, emotionally—the shapers of religion made it feasible to abandon God, to believe simply in man." And although Fox has reported in detail much of what one might call the friendly fire directed at Jesus, he does not mention the increasingly heavy hostile fire directed at Jesus and his cult. (As Vincent Carroll and David Shifflett note in *Christianity on Trial*, "Christianity inhabits a strange space in American life...with more than 90 percent of citizens professing belief in God and a large majority claiming allegiance to a Christian denomination or sect. Yet Christians are regularly targeted for ridicule and vilification by a significant portion of America's cultural elite.")

Fox expects that Americans will continue to find gainful employment for the Messiah: "If Jesus keeps his lofty station as a prime American cultural hero in centuries to come, it will be for two reasons: because so many Christians find him useful as a means of congratulating themselves, and because so many find him indispensable as a critic of their self-congratulation." Again, the reference to a certain psychological oscillation with which we are all familiar is accurate; but it is not immediately clear what would warrant our using Jesus as the hook whereon to hang our private emotional pendulum. When Fox does try to state forthrightly why Jesus should be the cynosure of our strivings toward self-improvement, the result is strange. Fox declares, "Jesus preached permanent revolution in the self. For a follower of Christ

"More than just good reading. What this book offers will change and deepen the faith of every Christian who reads it." —*The Pilot*



SALVATION IS FROM THE JEWS

Roy H. Schoeman

This important new book traces the essential role of Judaism and the Jewish people in God's plan for the salvation of mankind. From Abraham through the Second Coming, Schoeman's thoughtful examination of the Catholic faith as well as history shows Judaism as a central component of Christian salvation.

Schoeman, a Catholic convert from Judaism, reveals the incomprehensible importance, nobility and glory that Judaism most truly has. It examines the unique and central role Judaism plays in the destiny of the world. It documents that throughout history attacks on Jews and Judaism have been rooted not in Christianity, but in the most anti-Christian of forces.

Areas addressed in depth include: the Messianic prophecies in Jewish scripture; the very anti-Christian roots of Nazi anti-Semitism; the links between Nazism and Arab anti-Semitism; the theological insights of major Jewish converts; and the role of the Jews in the Second Coming. ***0-89870-975-X, 395 pages, Sewn Softcover, $16.95***

"A major work for our times." —*Judith Cabaud*

"Must reading for Jews and Gentiles." —*Sr. Margherita Marchione*

"A ground-breaking account." —*Ronda Chervin*

ignatius press 1-800-651-1531 • www.ignatius.com PO Box 1339, Ft. Collins, CO 80522

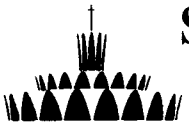
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

there can be no end to the self-scrutiny, and no end to the discovery of self-love masquerading as holiness." One could agree that there is some insight here—but this language, with its Maoist cadences (change a word or two and it could be a poster on the wall at a meeting of cultural revolutionists) evokes a kind of Chairman Jesus (There Will Be No Backsliding!) who lacks, to put it mildly, several dimensions of the Jesus of the Gospels.

Near the end of the book Fox offers his "own answer to the question, 'What would Jesus do?'" (The question, Fox notes, was made familiar in America as the signature phrase of the best-selling 1896 novel *In His Steps* by the Rev. Charles Seldon of Topeka.) "What would he do if he were an historian looking back at the cultural history of Christ in America?" asks Fox. "My guess is that he would listen in wonder, joy, confusion, and dismay to all the things that Americans have said about him for four hundred years."

PERHAPS SO. But would dismay or joy predominate? I can imagine a worried follower of Jesus surveying the American scene and saying with Mary Magdalene, "What have you done with my Lord?" I can equally imagine a modern disciple, faced with this vast bazaar of Jesuses, seeking comfort in the words spoken to the first disciples when they were experiencing a noninclusive moment: "He that is not against us is for us." But I find it hard to imagine a disciple, much less Jesus himself, experiencing positive joy upon finishing Fox's book. Attempting to state some of the worries of believers today, Fox writes, "In an era of apparent trivialization of the Jesus image, when he turns up on T-shirts and in advertisements, and in the lyrics of hundreds of popular songs, one might conclude that his divinity had been fatally compromised and his humanity woefully abused." But here Fox, for all his acuity, may be missing the believers' real worry. Jesus' appearance on kitsch or in ads, in vernacular modes and vulgar venues, is not the "trivialization" that worries believers. The worrisome trivialization is the sort this book seems to aid, lending scholarly support to a radical reductionism. The *New York Sun*'s review of *Jesus in America* happily concludes that while the "omnipresence of Jesus in our ostensibly secular country is troubling, his malleability is reassuring." Fox—with his endless references to Jesus as "malleable figure," "flexible symbol," "useful cultural currency," "ever-flexible," and "capacious umbrella"—positively, if unintentionally, invites us to avail ourselves of such reassurance.

This capacious-umbrella Jesus is the Christ whom Fox in this book most devotedly imitates, and there is scarcely a latter-day American manifestation that cannot find a place in his personal big tent. He has a good word for the film *Jesus Christ Superstar* (a "long-needed corrective"), for Serrano's "Piss Christ" photograph (it "provokes thought"), for McNally's gay play *Corpus Christi* (it "tests cultural boundaries"), for Dan Brown's novel *The Da Vinci Code* (it "forc[es] many readers like me to think further"), and so on. The only acid moment in the book, in fact, is its consideration of the biggest thing to hit American Jesusology in years, Mel Gibson's film *The Passion*. Fox does not claim to have seen the "just-released film," but he nevertheless has much to say about it, "judging by the trailer." The "publicity frenzy in 2003" was a ploy, he advises, instigated because "filmmakers such as Gibson" have learned that "Jesus the cultural symbol could be easily mobilized to



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY

A Benedictine monastery of Catholic priests and brothers

Is the Lord calling you to join us

- in exploring the mystery of God in prayer;
- in living a common life;
- in the work of teaching or administration in an outstanding college preparatory school for boys, grades 7 through 12?

For information about our Monastic Life ExperienceWeek
Saturday, June 12 - Sunday, June 20, 2004

contact Father Ralph Wright, OSB • Saint Louis Abbey
500 South Mason Road • Saint Louis, MO 63141.
Tel: 1-800-638-1527 or **1-314-434-5774**
E-mail: frralph@priory.org
or
visit our website at **www.stlouisabbey.org**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ensure a profitable reception." A sneer is patent here. Yet a few pages further on, Fox praises at great length the "skill and passion" of black minister T. D. Jakes of Dallas, a "master orator" who may be creating "a remarkably potent Christian ministry," and he rounds off his praise by saying, "Nothing could be more American: coming up with a new way of thinking about and marketing Jesus." Here the approval is unmistakable.

Why does Jakes get the bright tone and Gibson the sour tone? It is not because Gibson is marketing Jesus; after all, that is part of the all-American game. It's because as a "Latin traditionalist" he is marketing a retrograde and discredited Jesus. Gibson thus earns the distinction of being the only American in four hundred years of whose Jesus Fox unequivocally disapproves, and who alone is not invited to add his little patch to that great multicolored, homemade American Jesus quilt—three thousand miles wide and an inch deep—that Fox has described so warmly and so well.

BRIEFLY NOTED

THE SWORD OF THE LORD: MILITARY CHAPLAINS FROM THE FIRST TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY. Edited by DORIS L. BERGEN. *University of Notre Dame Press. 312 pp. $18 paper.*

The military chaplaincy in the West is the subject of this compilation of essays by historians and scholar-chaplains. The office took shape in the Carolingian era and has retained, with a few prominent exceptions, its noncombatant, ministerial character ever since. Chapters on late Roman predecessors, medieval chaplains, their analogues in early modern England, Frederick the Great's Prussia, the American Civil War, World Wars I and II, and Vietnam round out the book's sweeping historical reach. The paradox of serving God from inside the Leviathan preoccupies many of the contributors, and several seem to agree with Herman Melville, as quoted in editor Doris Bergen's introduction, that a chaplain in the army is "as incongruous as a musket would be on the altar at Christmas." Surely that was the case for German chaplains in World War II, as Bergen's disturbing chapter on them reports. She says that few to none of Germany's chaplains openly challenged Nazi authority, and most ended up pawns or collaborators. Elsewhere the paradox has been less acute, and stories of chaplains ministering to frightened or wounded soldiers constitute much of the substance of *The Sword of the Lord.* Rabbi Max Wall's reflections on his experience as a U.S. Army chaplain in postwar Germany are a welcome contrast to the report on Nazi chaplains. Wall helped Holocaust survivors to locate relatives and to get food and supplies from overseas sympathizers, and he even got involved in the growing Zionist movement. (Much of this was in direct violation of Army chaplain protocol, but he was evidently not hindered by Army authorities.) Chaplains today appear to be reversing the paradox altogether. Increasingly, they are transcending their roles as ministers and are instead being asked to play formal roles as moral advisors to policymakers. The U.S. Army began asking as much in the 1970s, and American chaplains have sometimes been strident critics of American policy. Reagan-era Chief of Chaplains Kermit Johnson, a Presbyterian, spoke out against some of his president's defense policies—and turned out to be wrong, as Anne C. Loveland's chapter unintentionally demonstrates (Loveland seems to rue the fact that as active-duty officers chaplains have a "limitation on [their] prophetic ministry"). In an age when a thousand American chaplains are charged with ministering to over one million members of the armed forces and their dependents worldwide, the demands on

A Must Read series of books about sex addiction that contain principles that apply to all addictions.

"How To Stay Away From Lust One Day At a Time" is a compelling series of books that uses the first book of Moses, Genesis, in its focus on lust. The series transfuses a spiritual awakening to anyone whose life is affected by compulsive sexual behavior and is searching for ways to deal with it.

If you suffer from any addiction and believe in the power of prayer this new series can profoundly improve your life.

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER
ORDER VOLUME 1 FOR ONLY $9.95 + $3. S. & H.

800-380-3704

VOLUMES 1-4 $49.95 + $4.00 S & H

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

Use Your Credit Card or send your check or money order to:
Emmet L. Billroy Publishers, Dept. FT
Suite 300 PMB 741• 2711 Centerville Rd. Wilmington, DE 19808
Visit our web site at www.billroy.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

chaplains are already formidable, and it is not clear that enlisting them as moral advisors on policy is a burden that should be added to their load.

—Brendan Conway

BYZANTIUM: FAITH AND POWER (1261 – 1557). Edited by HELEN C. EVANS. *Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press. 690 pp. $75.*

Those fortunate enough to be in New York City between now and July 4, 2004, can join the enormous crowds coming to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to see the unique exhibition to which this book is the companion. Those not that fortunate can still be inspired and enthralled by the art presented in the book, and can be educated by the seventeen major essays by a distinguished array of international scholars. Not just a companion to the exhibition, this massive volume is the complete catalogue, with 722 color illustrations, 141 black-and-white photographs, and three maps, along with superb captions, a glossary, and other informative text, bringing to life more than 350 masterpieces of Byzantine art that have been gathered from thirty nations. The artworks (icons, frescoes, mosaics, textiles, illuminated manuscripts, metalwork) are superb in their own right, and the cross-cultural artistic and intellectual currents flowing between Byzantium, the Islamic East, and the Christian West are interestingly explored. The exhibition catalogued in this book is the third in a series by the Met (the others were in 1977 and 1997) covering chronologically the art and influence of Byzantine civilization. This exhibition, like the prior ones, is a once-in-a-lifetime gathering of artworks —and this is a once-in-a-lifetime book. It can be purchased online at *www.metmuseum.org*.

—Larry Bailey

WILLIAM SLOANE COFFIN, JR.: A HOLY IMPATIENCE. By WARREN GOLDSTEIN. *Yale University Press. 378 pp. $30.*

A carefully researched and finely written biography of one of the most publicly prominent American religious figures of the second half of the twentieth century. While Goldstein is almost totally admiring of Coffin's ever more leftward politics, he has a keenly critical eye for the establishment world of WASPish privilege that shaped the young Coffin, from elite prep schools through the power networks of Yale, including initiation into Skull and Bones. Respected for his connections, energy, manliness, and sharp tongue, young Coffin took to the military and the military took to him in World War II. Goldstein treats with honesty and insight an episode of which Coffin is thoroughly ashamed, the sending of Soviet POWs back to Russia and almost certain death. In the face of the postwar Communist challenge, Coffin flirted with a career in American intelligence but finally chose the Presbyterian ministry. As the official chaplain of Yale, he made the university's chapel the center of moral argument and activism during the turbulent '60s, as well as leading "freedom rides" to promote racial desegregation in the South. In protesting U.S. policy in Vietnam, Coffin skillfully used the platform created by Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, Father Daniel Berrigan, and then–Lutheran Pastor Richard John Neuhaus, Clergy and Laity Concerned about Vietnam, which was the largest sustained antiwar organization of the time. After Yale, Coffin became senior pastor of the prestigious Riverside Church in New York City where he gave free rein to Cora Weiss, a formidable leader closely connected to the anti-anticommunist Old Left, in turning Riverside into the national base of operations for opposition to the Reagan policies that helped force the collapse of the Soviet Union. After a decade, Coffin left a bitterly divided Riverside to briefly head SANE/Freeze, an organization promoting disarmament. Twice divorced, Coffin now lives with his

Dordt College
Faculty Positions
August 2004

Dordt College is seeking applications in the following areas:

Communication (Full-time or Adjunct) Teach mass communication, broadcast journalism and production, and introductory courses in speaking and listening. Ph.D preferred; M.A. required.

Engineering (Possible one- or two-year temporary position) Teach engineering fundamentals courses as well as courses in the areas of mechanical or electrical engineering. At least an M.S. in engineering is required.

Mathematics (Part-time) Teach courses in undergraduate mathematics as well as contribute to the work of the Mathematics-Computer Science Department. Position could be either full-time for one semester, half-time for two semesters, or adjunct. Preference will be given to applicants with undergraduate teaching experience and advanced graduate training.

Evaluation of applications will continue until the positions are filled. To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and curriculum vita/ resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College
498 4th Ave. NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697
E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu
Web site: www.dordt.edu/offices/academic_affairs
Facsimile: 712-722-4496

Dordt College is an equal opportunity institution that strongly encourages the applications of women, minorities, and disabled persons.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

third wife in rural Vermont, and, although in fragile health, is occasionally brought in a wheelchair to left-wing meetings where he is introduced to younger participants as a man who was once very famous. Goldstein refers to the "biblical theology" that marked Coffin's preaching but shows little interest in what that theology might be. Entirely without mention is Coffin's involvement—albeit an uneasy involvement—in the 1975 Hartford Appeal for Theological Affirmation, an ecumenical effort initiated by sociologist Peter Berger and Richard John Neuhaus to challenge liberal directions in American theology and church life. While Coffin is obviously a hero—indeed a moral and political prophet—to his biographer, the poignant story told here is one of an increasingly disoriented and marginal figure whose great privilege and talent spiral downward into a life and a mission in shambles. An accomplished pianist who once dreamt of a concert career, Coffin has now found, Goldstein suggests, a measure of wisdom, even of tranquility. He employs a musical trope: "As he grows older, Coffin masters less and less; his God plays him more and more." *William Sloane Coffin, Jr.: A Holy Impatience* is very much worth reading to recall the excitements and certitudes of a now debilitated liberal Protestant establishment as that establishment was exemplified in a gifted leader whose like we will almost certainly never see again. Bill Coffin was the last blaze of a religious and cultural world now extinct.

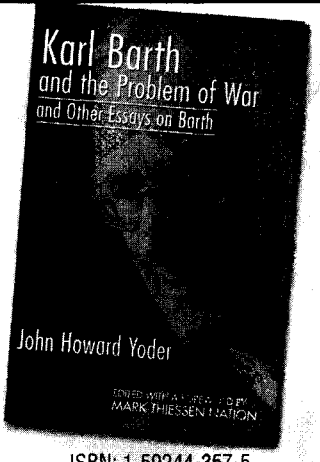
CATHOLIC THEOLOGIANS IN NAZI GERMANY. By ROBERT A. KRIEG. *Continuum. 222 pp. $24.95.*

The author, a professor of theology at Notre Dame, examines why some Catholic theologians (e.g., Karl Adam and Joseph Lortz) tended to be sympathetic to the collapse of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Adolf Hitler while others (e.g., Romano Guardini and Engelbert Krebs) were from the beginning opponents of the Third Reich. They were all, within the context of the time, viewed as liberals. Adam, Lortz, and Guardini are still read today, also in the English-speaking world. Adam pioneered an organic, as opposed to an institutional-hierarchical, ecclesiology; Lortz broke new ground with an ecumenical reconsideration of the Protestant Reformation; and Guardini accented a more personalist theology of the kind now associated with John Paul II. Krieg suggests that attitudes toward the Third Reich were largely informed by different ecclesiologies. Adam deplored the rootless individualism of Weimar and hoped that Nazism would foster a more communitarian understanding of both church and society. Guardini, in contrast, was sympathetically disposed toward modernity with its emphasis on the dignity of the person which collectivist Nazism treated with contempt. Krieg also offers an intelligent assessment of the conflicting views of German bishops, some of whom thought they could work out an uneasy accommodation with the Reich while others believed from the beginning that the totalitarian and pagan doctrines of the Nazis posed a lethal threat to the Church. With very few exceptions, Catholic leaders were so preoccupied with the threat to the Church

New from Cascade Books
A division of Wipf & Stock Publishers
"A cross-confessional publishing venture."

"In these pages one of the 20th century's most important figures in Christian social ethics engages with another over a period of thirty years, with the result that light shines on both. . . .a classic piece of critical interpretation of Barth's ethical thought, and it remains one of the most searching English-language analyses of his treatment of a particular moral issue and of his 'casuistical' method."

— Nigel Biggar, Professor of Theology at the University of Leeds, England and Professor-elect at Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland.



ISBN: 1-59244-357-5
200p., $25, Paper

Other available titles by Karl Barth from Wipf & Stock Publishers

1592444369
60 pages, $8

1592442501
176 pages, $19

1592444024
68 pages, $10

1592443834
214 pages, $21

available in stores • www.wipfandstock.com • Tel. (541) 344-1528 • Fax. (541) 344-1506

Windows BOOKSELLERS
199 West 8th Ave. • Eugene OR 97401

WE BUY BOOKS!

Specializing in theology, biblical studies and church history since 1987.

Tel. (800) 779-1701
windowsbk@academicbooks.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that they gave little attention to what was happening to the Jews and viewed the dissolution of Protestantism as no more than a fate to be avoided. Krieg is for the most part assiduously evenhanded in assessing the different responses to the Reich and recognizes that an ecclesiology based on the concept of *societas perfecta* (the Church as a "perfect society") had its considerable strengths, as well as obvious weaknesses, in helping Catholics to resist the ravages of the Hitler regime.

BONDS OF IMPERFECTION: CHRISTIAN POLITICS, PAST AND PRESENT. By OLIVER O'DONOVAN and JOAN LOCKWOOD O'DONOVAN. *Eerdmans. 324 pp. $35 paper.*

Oliver O'Donovan of Oxford is known to our readers as the author of *Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theology* (reviewed in FT November 1997). The O'Donovans, husband and wife, press with force and style a theo-political challenge to the regnant political philosophies of modernity and the hyper-modernity called postmodernity. The present book includes essays ranging widely, from a fresh interpretation of Augustine's *City of God* to the ethical thought of Erasmus to the differences between Protestant theologians Karl Barth and Paul Ramsey on the uses of power. Of very particular interest is Joan Lockwood O'Donovan's "The Theological Economics of Medieval Usury Theory," in which she demonstrates that, in the hands of Dominican and Franciscan expositors, Catholic prohibition of usury was not a simple prohibition but part of a sophisticated economic theory of participation, mutual obligation, and particular concern for the disadvantaged and poor. It contained within it the seeds of moral wisdom essential to the conduct of later market economics. The O'Donovans have given us the invaluable reference work, *From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought* (also from Eerdmans), and the present book should be welcomed as a thoughtful commentary on those formative texts and their continuing vitality in contemporary Christian disputes over the right ordering of the relationship between Christ and Caesar.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS: RECOVERING THE POWER OF THE ANCIENT PRAYER. By BERT GHEZZI. *Loyola. 120 pp. $16.95.*

The introduction promises, about twice per page, the "power" mentioned in the subtitle, in language that veers toward the peppy-promotional ("tremendous power," "life-transforming power," "plug into a source of spiritual power"). But introductions are hard to write; once the author settles into his subject the echoes of adspeak die away, and the thrust of Ghezzi's candid and heartfelt reflections becomes clear: the Christian life is more akin to self-immolation than to self-improvement. He quotes this from St. John Chrysostom: "When you mark your breast, your eyes, and all your members with the sign of the cross, offer yourself as a victim pleasing to God"—and he offers many other snippets culled from two millennia of Christian rumination on this seemingly simple gesture. Ghezzi gives a very brief history of the sign, with its themes and variations, mentioning in passing that "some Protestants repudiated the sign of the cross" but noting that Luther, in *The Small Catechism*, recommended it: "As soon as you get out of bed in the morning, you should bless yourself with the sign of the Holy Cross and say, 'May the will of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be done! Amen.'" Ghezzi's purpose is neither historical nor apologetical; he seeks only to propose the sign afresh to those for whom this cruciform sacramental has been vitiated by routine. His insights into spiritual life are often shrewd ("Scripture says that we must crucify our self-indulgence, and crucifixion is a slow, agonizing form of death"), and his enthusiasm for this "easy spiritual discipline" may prove to be contagious—powerfully so.

MODERN SOCIAL IMAGINARIES. By CHARLES TAYLOR. *Duke University Press. 215 pp. $18.95 paper.*

The noted political philosopher, now at Northwestern University, expands a part of his Gifford Lectures that addresses the question of whether there is one modernity or several. Arguing for the latter, Taylor shows how the Western, mainly European, tradition of modernity—based on ideas of natural law, contract theory, public opinion, equality, and the individual as participant in multiple communities—has evolved in a way that has accommodated the essentially religious grounding of society. The "imaginaries" of the title is, despite his defense of the term, a somewhat idiosyncratic synonym for "imaginations." As always with Taylor, the writing is marked by erudition, elegance, and generosity of spirit. The book, while hardly mentioning Islam or other traditions, may be seen as a quietly understated thesis congruent with Samuel Huntington's more pointed reflections on "the clash of civilizations."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion, Culture, and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

THE CATHOLIC REFORM II

Last month we began an extended report on the two reports issued on February 27 and on some of the preliminary responses to the reports. The first report, commissioned by the National Review Board, consisted of the findings of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice on the incidence and nature of sex abuse by Catholic clergy from 1950 to 2002. The limited media attention focused on the finding that there were some ten thousand accusations against four thousand priests, or about four percent of the priests serving during the time studied. We noted that no other major institution in American society—notably the public school system, social workers, Boy Scouts, athletic associations—has been subjected to similar scrutiny, and that some experts believe that the incidence of sex abuse by priests and bishops is relatively small by comparison. Moreover, we took into account statistical analyses of the John Jay findings, including the fact that only 149 priests accounted for more than a quarter of all accusations, that can lead to the conclusion that the sex abuse crisis was significantly exaggerated. From a purely statistical viewpoint, it no doubt was exaggerated, and for various reasons: e.g., raw anti-Catholicism in the media, a continuing campaign within the Church against the celibacy rule, and an effort to exclude or remove homosexuals from the priesthood. The likelihood of exaggeration in the number and gravity of offenses, however, provides naught for our comfort. The report of the National Review Board itself (as distinct from the John Jay report commissioned by the NRB) underscores that the sexual abuse of minors simply opened a window, exposing a much more pervasive and deeply troubling "Crisis in the Catholic Church in the United States."

According to the NRB, the crisis was chiefly created by what can only be described as misgovernance by the bishops. As might be expected, this news is not welcomed by many bishops, and certainly not by the bureaucracy of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), which in some matters is the collective representative of the bishops. The misgovernance reported by the NRB does not include all bishops by any means. Many, probably most, are hard-working, conscientious leaders trying to do their best in shepherding their local churches. Neither, however, does the NRB report focus on isolated incidents of misgovernance. It discerns far-reaching patterns that call for a searching reappraisal of the leadership of the Church in the United States. The NRB report will be "put on the agenda" of the June meeting of bishops, but there is a concern that it will there be accorded a perfunctory discussion before being consigned to the archives of the USCCB — or assigned to a committee for "further study," which might amount to much the same thing. If that happens, a historic opportunity will have been missed for the reform of the Church, and not least for the restoration of gravely damaged confidence in the Church's episcopal leadership.

Contrary to the general impression, there are many lay advisory groups in the Catholic Church. One archbishop says that he can hardly make a move unless he checks it out with lay panels or boards, and doing something major, such as closing a parish, is a nightmare of battling a dozen or more lay groups.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Even the USCCB has a lay body that goes over the agenda for meetings of bishops and makes recommendations. The reality, however, is that the NRB and its report are something very different. The NRB was created by the bishops in response to what is commonly called "the greatest crisis in the history of Catholicism in America." There have been other crises that may have been as severe. For instance, the trusteeship crisis of the nineteenth century that threatened to move Catholicism to a "congregationalist" polity, or the crisis of episcopal inaction in the face of orchestrated dissent from the 1968 encyclical on human sexuality, *Humanae Vitae*, a dissent that powerfully undermined the authority of magisterial teaching. But the sex-abuse crisis prompted the bishops to give the NRB a mandate to examine the "causes and context" of what went wrong with the Church's leadership and what should be done about it. It may be, as some bishops complain, that the NRB went beyond what they thought was its mandate, but it was only the promise that its investigation would be independent and comprehensive that made it possible to enlist the extraordinary talents and devotion of the twelve lay people who worked so hard to produce the report.

The Smoke of Satan

These people are not the usual church activists or chronic malcontents, whether of the left or the right, who are the bane of every bishop's life. They do not question the divine constitution of the Church's apostolic leadership; nor are they interested in "power sharing," meaning endless meetings to nitpick a bishop's every decision. They have a life, and they have made great sacrifices to serve on the NRB. Their only interest is in helping the bishops to be more effectively the shepherds they are ordained to be. If the product of their work is not taken seriously—as, for instance, an invaluable reference in a synod of bishops dedicated to a program of comprehensive reform—it may be a very, very long time before people of their quality will make a comparable effort to help the bishops with much of anything. Of course, that may be just fine with some bishops who still believe that the Church is a clerical corporation and the role of the laity is, as the old saying has it, to pray, pay, and obey. There will be a strong and understandable desire at the June meeting to "move on" from the nightmare of scandals. Bishop Wilton Gregory, president of the USCCB, will likely receive a well-deserved standing ovation for having moved the scandals out of the headlines. Then will come the critical question of whether the bishops as a body are really interested in the "causes and context" of what went wrong, and has been going wrong for so long. That will be answered in large part by their response to the NRB report. Was the NRB and its report simply a ploy in a public relations strategy, or will it be received and acted upon in advancing a program of authentic Catholic reform?

Whatever the bishops do with it, the NRB report is a historically important document that warrants careful study. (The complete 150-page document can be found at *www.usccb.org/nrb*). The two questions with which the report begins are: 1) why did sexual predators gain admission to the priesthood; and 2) why did they remain in the priesthood after their abuse was know to bishops and other leaders? A summary answer is that the responses of too many bishops "were characterized by moral laxity, excessive leniency, insensitivity, secrecy, and neglect." The fear of litigation (the Church has to date put out close to seven hundred million dollars in settlements) and of public scandal led some bishops to minimize the fact that what some priests were doing was, as the NRB says, "simply immoral." "Sexual abuse is inherently traumatic; when committed by a priest, it is especially traumatic. Because a priest is quite literally a 'father figure,' abuse by a priest is likely to cause more harm to a child than abuse by any other individual outside the family. Moreover, a unique consequence of abuse by a member of the clergy is the damage to the victim's faith." The immorality and horror of what was happening reflected the fact that the bishops in question were not paying attention, and apparently did not want to know. One priest interviewed said that he could have a concubine and three children and his bishop would not know it. It would appear that there are many more incidents of priests having a sexual relationship with an adult woman or man than with minors. Such relationships are, in many cases, not viewed as a major problem because they usually do not have legal, financial, or public relations consequences for the Church, and are therefore deemed to be "nobody's business." The report states, "Whether a priest keeps his vows and lives in accordance with the moral precepts of the Church is the business of his bishop, his fellow priests, and his parishioners."

While there are many ways of understanding the current crisis, the Board believes that "the overriding paradigm that characterizes the crisis is one of sinfulness." The Board borrows a phrase from Pope Paul VI: "Somehow, the 'smoke of Satan' was allowed to enter the Church, and as a result the Church itself has been deeply wounded." "The only way to combat sinfulness is with holiness. . . . Priests who were truly holy would not have abused young people; nor would they have allowed others to do so." In short, the crisis is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

about fidelity, fidelity, fidelity. Here the report touches on a factor that has only been whispered about in the past. Some bishops may have failed to do their duty because they were themselves sexually compromised. "That is, priests either explicitly or implicitly threatened to reveal compromising information about a bishop if the bishop took steps against the priest." Anyone who "could be subject to blackmail," the report says, "should not allow himself to be elevated to bishop or placed in any other position of authority."

The report, in my judgment, goes a little wobbly on the Dallas policy of "zero tolerance" for a priest who has ever been accused of anything at any time, no matter how long ago, and no matter how impeccable his record of service over years or decades since. Recognizing that zero tolerance is a "blunt instrument," the report says, "Nonetheless, the Board believes that for the immediate future the zero-tolerance policy is essential to the restoration of the trust of the laity in the leadership of the Church, provided that it is appropriately applied." Beyond the immediate future, the goal should be "individualized justice." It is reported that over seven hundred accused priests have been peremptorily removed from ministry. Others who have been closely tracking these developments, such as the Detroit-based Opus Bono Sacerdotii, an organization of lawyers helping accused priests, estimate that more than a thousand have been removed. As one priest told the Board, "It's like being divorced by your wife, fired from your job, and evicted from your home all at once." And all this without any effective channel of appeal.

Scandal Within the Scandal

It is hard to know how zero tolerance can be "appropriately applied." Zero tolerance excludes by definition any consideration of what is appropriate. A priest who is accused of even one incident—even if it was no more than a misunderstood hug, and even if that was twenty or thirty years ago—and has given his life in faithful service to the people of God ever since, is rudely thrown out, not because he poses a credible threat to anyone but because he is a convenient scapegoat for bishops who, after years of laxity, now want to look tough. Such a gross violation of the Church's teaching about repentance, forgiveness, and amendment of life—not to mention its violation of elementary justice—is the scandal within the scandal, and no institutional exigency can morally justify it, even for "the immediate future." Yet some bishops are talking about the need to extend the zero-tolerance policy beyond the two-year trial period reluctantly allowed by Rome. In the Pope's April 2002 meeting with American bishops he said there is no place in ministry for anyone who poses a threat to children. He also said we must never forget the power of forgiveness and redemption. The first admonition has been regularly cited, and rightly so. The second has been quite forgotten. On the advice of lawyers and public relations experts, care is taken to avoid any suggestion that bishops are ministers of grace and forgiveness. The media would have a field day with that. And so the innocent are treated as prodigal, and the prodigal son returning home is turned away at the gate. The Good Shepherd could afford to rejoice in the lost sheep that was found; His sheep did not pose a risk of legal liability. Bishops who promised to be fathers to their priests toss to the wolves the innocent and the guilty alike, all in the name of "protecting the children," but protecting, in fact, themselves and an institution that has no reason for being other than to minister the justice and mercy of God. Zero tolerance is a denial of both justice and mercy. Bishops, and all of us, must tremble at the prospect of its being the policy in force at the Final Assize. How many souls were deprived of care, and perhaps of salvation, because of the unjust removal of good and faithful priests? One must hope that bishops are asking themselves now the questions that will surely be asked of them then.

Father Ladislas Orsy, one of the world's most distinguished canonists, recently wrote in the *Boston College Law Review*: "The law should have 'zero tolerance' toward any crime by proscribing it, but the judge and jury should weigh and ponder the personal responsibility and culpability of the accused (which can exist in different degrees) and come to a decision accordingly. This distinction is foundational for any civilized legal system and is also a matter of natural justice. Yet the 'Norms' [adopted at Dallas] ignore it, a grave omission." After having for so long turned a blind eye to the guilty, bishops are now, as though it were some kind of compensation for their negligence, turning a blind eye to the innocent. It does not enhance the credibility of a Church that, on so many fronts, presents itself as an expert on justice. The report notes again and again that there is no comparable zero-tolerance policy for bishops who protected predator priests and continued to give them assignments. Roger Cardinal Mahony of Los Angeles, for example, is alleged to "have allowed numerous predator priests to remain in ministry," and then to have placed obstacles in the way of law enforcement authorities, all of which, in the understated words of the report, "did little to enhance the reputation of the Church for transparency and cooperation." Or, one might add, for justice.

The report repeatedly stresses that "this crisis [is]

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one of the episcopacy as much as it is a crisis of the priesthood," and it cites the 2003 apostolic exhortation by John Paul II, *Pastores Gregis*: "The title of Bishop is one of service, not of honor, and therefore a Bishop should strive to benefit others rather than to lord it over them. Such is the precept of the Master." By way of sharpest contrast, the Board encountered a "haughty" and uncooperative manner in some bishops, leading them to the conclusion that "the exercise of authority without accountability is not servant-leadership; it is tyranny." As of this writing, a bishop accused of abusing minors remains in office and is using the full resources of the diocese to defend himself in the public arena. One must hope that he is innocent, but, were he a priest, it seems he would have been immediately and permanently removed from ministry. A particularly egregious instance of double standards and nonaccountability is the former Archbishop of Milwaukee, Rembert Weakland, who settled a matter related to his relationship with an adult male, a former theology student, by paying the man $450,000 out of church funds. Had the amount been $50,000 more, it would have required the approval of the diocesan finance council. "Clearly," the Board says, "a bishop should not be allowed to make such a large payment, whether on behalf of himself or priests in his diocese, with no oversight." Weakland's resignation was accepted by Rome only when the scandal became public, but his actions reflect a pattern of the corruption that attends leadership without accountability.

"Causes and Context"

In addressing the "causes and context" of the crisis, the NRB is on issue after issue refreshingly forthright. Too often, they concluded, lawyers were dictating the decisions of bishops. Fear of litigation, an admittedly necessary concern, trumped a bishop's duty to his priests and to his flock. Bishops are also scored for relying on psychotherapists to evaluate miscreant priests, sometimes shopping around for positive evaluations in order to return abusers to ministry. In this way, bishops also evaded the requirements of canon law and their own responsibility for making judgments. Most grievously, dependence on the therapeutic resulted in a dismissal in practice, if not a denial in theory, of the Church's constituting truths with respect to sin, forgiveness, repentance, and redemption. Verging on the incredible, in the week following the release of the NRB report, the Los Angeles Archdiocese issued a statement declaring: "The Church treated clerical sexual abuse primarily as a moral weakness and a sin. For years this misunderstanding underlay ineffectual policies for dealing with abuse of minors. Changes in Church and professional psychological thinking unfolded over nearly two decades and gradually empowered the Archbishop and the Church as a whole to improve those policies." That statement of putative improvement perfectly encapsulates a way of thinking that greatly exacerbated the crisis in many dioceses, and very notably in Los Angeles.

The NRB report does not ignore the reckless and self-serving ways in which bishops escaped criminal liability by pleading guilty on behalf of their dioceses and handing important aspects of church governance over to civil authorities. Such bishops had no right, morally or canonically, to do what they did, and the Church may be suffering for years from their selling out of the Church's First Amendment rights of self-governance. Nor does the report flinch from taking on the question of homosexuality in the priesthood. At the height of the epidemic, in 1975-1980, 86 percent of abuse cases involved adolescent boys. The point is not that homosexuals are more likely to be child abusers. The point is that, as heterosexual men are attracted to young women, homosexual men are attracted to young men, and homosexual priests have more opportunities to act on their attractions. One need not get into obfuscatingly complicated arguments about the nature of homosexuality. The 86 percent figure speaks for itself. Between men who want to have sex with adolescent boys and men who do not want to have sex with adolescent boys, the former are more likely to have sex with adolescent boys. QED—in scandalous spades.

The NRB found ample evidence supporting the claims that some seminaries in the 1960s through the early 1980s were "pink palaces" or powerfully influenced by "lavender mafias," including sleeping around by both students and faculty. An official visitation of seminaries in the early 1990s made a big difference, and it cannot be overlooked that in recent years the incidence of sexual abuse has declined to the level of 1950, before the epidemic broke out. There are still a few "gay-friendly" bishops, but they are keeping a low profile. The general attitude toward ordaining homosexuals or admitting them to the seminary has dramatically changed. Some bishops exclude from seminary anyone who is significantly, never mind dominantly or exclusively, given to same-sex attraction. Almost all now agree that any suggestion of homosexuality is reason for "heightened scrutiny" in admitting a man to the seminary. At the same time, and as the NRB rightly notes, there are undoubtedly in the priesthood many men afflicted by same-sex attractions who are nonetheless good and faithful priests living lives of chaste celibacy. The crucial question is not the nature

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of temptation but the fidelity with which temptation is overcome. At the same time, in light of the disastrous experience of recent decades and the growing cultural pressures for homosexual acting-out, most bishops seem to be concluding that same-sex attraction of any degree simply poses too great a risk in admitting men to the seminary.

The NRB makes a point of not challenging the discipline of celibacy for priests, choosing rather to stress that celibacy must mean celibacy, as in chastity. Some members of the Board were obviously taken aback to discover in the course of their study that a sizeable number of priests were ordained under the impression that celibacy does not necessarily mean celibacy. Beginning in the late '60s, some were told in seminary that celibacy means only that you can't get married; sex outside of marriage is quite another matter. Others were assured that the celibacy rule would be abandoned within a few years. The resulting disappointment no doubt contributed to thousands of priests leaving the active ministry during these decades. The Board strongly accents the importance of spiritual formation for a faithful celibate life, a life made more difficult, even heroic, in a culture that teaches that sexual relations are essential to having a life at all. Bishops are sharply criticized for not giving personal attention to the problems their men may be encountering in this connection, both at seminary and after ordination.

The Way to Reform

If bishops are unhappy with this and other criticisms, the Board responds that it is only doing what the bishops asked it to do. Looking into "causes and context" sounds anodyne enough, until it turns out that the Board is as independent as the bishops promised it would be in June of 2002, and very specific "causes" multiply to expose a "context" of misgovernance. The Board lets it be known that it is not working entirely at the sufferance of the USCCB. "Although the direct source of the Review Board's authority lies in Article 9 of the [Dallas] Charter, the Board's ultimate authority lies in church law." Canon 212 of the Code of Canon Law is cited:

> According to the knowledge, competence, and prestige which they [the laity] possess, they have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church and to make their opinion known to the rest of the Christian faithful, without prejudice to the integrity of faith and morals, with reverence toward their pastors, and attentive to common advantage and the dignity of persons.

The Board manifestly believes that this is a time for the exercising of that right and the doing of that duty. It is also canon law, they note, that the bishops all too often ignored, as though the Church had not for centuries had clear provisions in place for dealing with sexual miscreants in the clergy. At the same time, Rome, too, is criticized for its languid attitude and complicated procedures. "The Vatican did not recognize the scope or gravity of the problem facing the Church in the United States despite many warning signs; and it rebuffed earlier attempts to reform procedures for removing predator priests." To the consternation of some bishops here, members of the Board arranged on their own to consult with leading prelates in the Roman Curia and were greatly heartened by the understanding and encouragement they received. Throughout their report they invoke John Paul II and, most particularly, his exhortation that out of this crisis must come "a holier priesthood, a holier episcopate, a holier Church."

Of the recommendations made by the Board, most have to do with the reform of the episcopate. If bishops are really to know the priests and people they are supposed to shepherd, there should be less moving of bishops from one diocese to another. The clericalist career pattern of "promotion" to a larger and more prominent diocese or archdiocese should be abandoned. To encourage a more effective bishop-priest relationship, others have suggested reducing the size of larger dioceses. There is no way in which one bishop can really know what is going on in the life and ministry of hundreds of priests. For that he has to delegate oversight to auxiliary bishops and others, as was done with unhappy consequences in Boston under Cardinal Law. In the selection and placement of bishops, the report notes, a "'don't-rock-the-boat' attitude prevailed for too long." Priests who are outspoken and are proven pastors of souls are too often excluded from the episcopate in favor of chancery clerks whose chief virtue is not having blotted their copybooks. Some think it controversial that the Board says that "greater involvement by the laity in the selection of bishops could help ensure that future bishops are pastors, prophets, and men of honor, and not mere management functionaries." In fact, there is venerable precedent for a role by the laity in the selection of bishops. Nobody should want the politicizing of church leadership that comes with popular elections, as is the case in many Protestant denominations, and the Board assumes the right of the pope to appoint bishops, but they are convinced that the present pattern of the pro-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

motion of the like-minded by the like-minded within a clericalist club designed to perpetuate the habits that created the present crisis is not a promising way toward reform.

Again, the NRB wants bishops to be bishops, as they were ordained to be. Of the long and difficult process leading up to the issuing of the report, one NRB member says, "I found myself loving the Church more, and working harder not to despair of her leadership." While the Board's recommendations address modest structural changes, involving also greater lay oversight, the real appeal, the urgent appeal, the almost poignant appeal, is to the bishops, pleading with them to exercise the responsibility that is theirs. The report stresses the importance of "fraternal correction" among the bishops, recognizing that accountability, given the polity of the Catholic Church, means chiefly the accountability of bishops to one another. Too many bishops view their diocese as a personal fiefdom and will brook no "outside interference." Specifically, the Board urges a revival of the oversight role of metropolitans, i.e., archbishops overseeing bishops in their province. It is suggested also that the bishops should devise a system of regular visitations of the dioceses of their fellow bishops, a proposal, it is suggested, that should pose no threat to bishops who do not fear being held accountable. Such a visitation process would not be attended by jurisdictional authority but would be more like the regular accrediting visitations in the academic world. Very conspicuously, and perhaps understandably, the Board has little to say about a role for the USCCB in any believable program of reform and renewal.

The NRB report concludes with the following "Coda":

> In making public this report and recognizing the stain that it exposes on the Church that we love, we can but recall the words of the psalmist who taught that, while hidden guilt festers, honest admission of guilt heals:
>
> As long as I kept silent,
> My bones wasted away;
> I groaned all the day . . .
> Then I declared my sin to you;
> my guilt I did not hide.
> I said, "I confess my faults to the Lord,"
> and you took away the guilt of my sin.
> (Psalm 32)
>
> It is with that faith in the merciful powers of the Almighty that we members of the National Review Board offer the candid judgments we have been asked to give. How, one may ask, can any forgiveness, much less renewal, emerge from such a sordid history of misdeeds? We are inspired, as always, by the example of Jesus who two thousand years ago founded this Church and who during his life on earth instructed his disciples, "For human beings this is impossible, but for God all things are possible."

Now, as always, and as it should be, it is up to the bishops. They can embrace this report on the "Crisis in the Catholic Church in the United States" as a starting point and set themselves on a course of reform and renewal that could, among other benefits, restore the confidence of priests and people in their leadership. Or they can congratulate themselves on the public relations success of having commissioned an independent study, thank the NRB for its labors, and inter the report indirectly by referring it to a committee for further study or, more directly, by consigning it to the archives. If, willy-nilly, they decide in favor of interment, I expect that twenty or fifty years from now historians will write that "the greatest crisis in the history of Catholicism in America" was promptly followed by one of its greatest missed opportunities.

FT

COMPLEXIFYING EVIL

The French adage has it wrong: to understand all is not to forgive all. But it is true that the more we understand the more we can enter into the moral drama of decisions and actions that, in retrospect, seem so brutally obvious. Virtue consists, in significant part, in refusing to turn complexities into excuses. Many commentators on Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* claimed the treatment of Pontius Pilate was sympathetic. But he is sympathetic only to those prone to turn complexities into excuses. After all the hand-wringing and hand washing, he condemned to death a man he knew to be innocent. The conflation of complexities and excuses marks much of the moral reasoning of our time. The twentieth century's moral drama of Hitler and the Holocaust is currently being rethought and retold in ways that enrich the moral drama but must not be permitted to fudge the moral judgment of the horrors committed. When I say the story is being retold in fresh ways, I do not refer to the Lidless Eye crowd of Holocaust deniers, who will likely always be with us, but to works of substantial scholarship that are rightly welcomed for helping us to understand how what happened did happen.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There is, for instance, Christopher Browning's *The Origins of the Final Solution* (reviewed in this issue). Browning reminds us that history is less a matter of the implementation of grand plans than of reactions to unexpected contingencies. For many on the left, the key to understanding the Third Reich is Hitler's all-consuming determination to destroy Bolshevism, with the extermination of the Jews as a consequence of that obsession. For other writers, the extermination of the Jews was the overriding purpose that explains his many other crimes. Browning's prodigious research shows that, while the virulent hostility to Jews was a constant, the Third Reich settled on systematic extermination along the lines of Auschwitz and other death camps only after other possibilities, such as the massive expulsion of Jews, were foreclosed, and the feasibility of eliminating Jews, gypsies, and political enemies in conquered Soviet territories had been demonstrated. There was, in other words, an incremental and by no means predetermined movement to the ultimate evil. There were points along the way when a different course might have been chosen.

The drama of those who chose a different course, not only or chiefly with respect to the Jews but with respect to the Nazi regime in toto, is detailed by Hans Mommsen in *Alternatives to Hitler: German Resistance Under the Third Reich* (Princeton University Press, 320 pp. $29.95). Mommsen is considered the dean of twentieth-century German historians and has written about the German resistance before, but this time he focuses on what resisters had in mind for the regime that would succeed Hitler's tyranny. Tens of thousands of Germans, many of them later executed, were actively involved in various forms of resistance against the Nazi regime. Those who were most serious about planning a successor government—notably Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Claus von Stauffenberg, Helmuth von Moltke, and others of the Kreisau Circle—are often depicted as aristocratic in sentiment and distinctly undemocratic in their political views. Mommsen suggests that was only partly true, and emphasizes the ways in which they included labor leaders and left-leaning socialists in their planning. He underscores, too, the way in which the Allied goal of "unconditional surrender" hobbled their efforts to gain support, both inside and outside Germany, for the prospect of what today we might call regime change.

The near-successful attempt to assassinate Hitler on July 20, 1944, was undertaken, Mommsen suggests, in a spirit of desperation to demonstrate the seriousness of the conspirators and the vulnerability of the regime. The conspirators were often "realists" who were not averse to making deals with Nazis in order to further their ends. As Mommsen notes, "The line drawn between good and evil was far from being as clear-cut as it has been represented in retrospect." With respect to the Jews and others who were viewed as enemies of the Reich, conspirators in the army did not come with clean hands. "We have no alternative but to admit," Mommsen writes, "that a considerable number of those who played an active part in the July Plot, and in many cases lost their lives as a result, had previously participated in the war of racial extermination, or had at least approved of it for quite a time and in some cases had actively promoted it. As a rule, this happened under the cloak of fighting the partisans [in Soviet territories], yet those who were directly or indirectly involved could scarcely fail to see that the SS brigades and *Einsatzgruppen* were carrying out a comprehensive 'ethnic cleansing,' to which the Wehrmacht, if only by condemning large numbers of Russians to starvation, were giving active support."

"The great majority of the plotters," he writes, "only gradually broke free from the basically anti-Semitic sentiment that tainted the German upper class and governing elite, but which made an exception for assimilated groups of Jews." For some younger conspirators, the anti-Semitic policies of the regime were a major factor in turning them against Hitler, but for almost all, says Mommsen, those policies were not the decisive factor. The brutal treatment of Jews (the scope of systematic exterminationism was not generally known) was perceived as being of a piece with what they saw as Germany's descent into barbarism. That, combined with opposition to a war that they believed could end only in catastrophic defeat, galvanized the resistance. For only a few—notably Pastor Bonhoeffer and Father Alfred Delp, a Jesuit—was the treatment of Jews a dominating reason for rebellion. Mommsen notes, as have many others, that the resisters were drawn chiefly from the churches, the army, and the higher levels of civil service. Conspicuously absent from the resistance were academics. As also was the case in the most oppressive years of the Soviet Union, academics and artists—who typically style themselves the guardians of freedom and human rights—were, with few heroic exceptions, the most adept at making their peace with tyranny. *Alternatives to Hitler* is especially helpful in depicting the kind of Germany and Europe that the conspirators envisioned after Hitler. Their plans were strikingly similar to the integration of nationalisms or what might more accurately be called the supranationalism of today's European Union. With the critical difference to which Mommsen returns again and again—namely, their conviction that a secure and peaceful Europe could only be built on cultural foundations that are explicitly Christian.

A very different book from and about the same peri-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

od is *Day of No Return* by Kressmann Taylor. Written in 1942 and today, unfortunately, available only online, it is the tale of a theology student in the 1930s whose father, pastor of a large congregation in Magdeburg, bravely attempted to prevent the Nazi-sponsored "German Christians" from taking over the Protestant Church. The "Karl Hoffman" of the story is based on the real-world experience of the late Leopold Bernhard, a Lutheran pastor who fled Germany and ministered for years in this country. I knew Bernhard and respected him greatly. We had worked together on civil rights questions in the 1960s. For complicated reasons, *Day of No Return* has only now been made available. I wish I had been able to read it back then and had the chance to discuss with Bernhard the early years under Nazism. I cannot say the book is great literature, but it is a good read, and it provides a powerful feel for the day-by-day pressures exerted by a regime bent upon extinguishing any independent force of possible opposition, and especially any force appealing to an authority transcending the state.

The Origins of the Final Solution, Alternatives to Hitler, and *Day of No Return* have in common the great merit of helping us understand how people could do the unspeakable things they did. And the latter two have the additional merit of illuminating how people could and did say No to great evil. One is reminded of the words of John Paul II in the encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* that, if one is prepared to die rather than to do wrong, one is never in the position of having to do wrong. Most people do not think of themselves as heroes and heroines, and yet, when the time of decision is forced upon them, many turn out to be exactly that. That is the truth so compellingly told in the 1988 classic, *The Altruistic Personality*, a study by Sam and Pearl Oliner of hundreds of people who rescued Jews during the Holocaust. The rescuers were typically not intellectuals or philo-Semites or people given to political activism. They were to all appearances very ordinary people, usually devoutly religious people, who knew that some things must not be done and who put their lives in the way of the doing of such things. Academics have a way of explaining history in terms of large and impersonal dynamics. But living history is the moral drama of people making decisions day by day. As for those who do great wrong, it is not true that to understand all is to forgive all. But to understand, at least in part, is to be strengthened in the knowledge of our own capacity for both good and evil—and of our radical dependence on the One who, despite His understanding all, forgives the penitent. The truly penitent know that complexification is the enemy of forgiveness.

FT

RELIGION AND DEMOCRACY: A NECESSARY TENSION

Many years ago, in 1965 to be precise, Irving Kristol, Daniel Bell, and Nathan Glazer were worried about ideological seizures in the social sciences and decided to do something about it. They established the *Public Interest*, a quarterly that has had an enormous influence far beyond its few thousand subscribers. Over the years, there has hardly been a major rethinking of social policy that did not start with, or receive an indispensable boost from, the *Public Interest*. As the editor notes in the Spring 2004 issue, the magazine has regularly attended to the importance of religion in society, but this time the entire issue is devoted to "Religion in America." One detects just a hint of defensiveness on the editor's part. He writes that "all our authors look at religion in America, as did Tocqueville, from 'a purely human point of view.'" That I take to be a vestigial secularist tic, reflecting the fact that it used to be not quite respectable for social scientists to take religion too seriously. Like Tocqueville, the authors here write about religion as social observers, but they also understand religion "from within" as committed adherents. Of the thirteen contributors, four are, to my personal knowledge, devout Protestants, four are devout Catholics, and at least one is an observant Jew. Perhaps there should have been a fourteenth essay on why being religious is not a disqualification but an asset in writing intelligently about religion. That having been said, there is much good stuff in this special issue of the *Public Interest*. Herewith a sampler:

• The lead essay is by Wilfred McClay of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, who is also, not incidentally, a member of the FT editorial board. September 11, he writes, "produced a great revitalization, for a time, of the American civil religion, that strain of American piety that bestows many of the elements of religious sentiment and faith upon the fundamental political and social institutions of the United States." President Bush, he says, "puts forward the civil-religious vision of America with the greatest energy of any president since Woodrow Wilson." McClay quotes Bush at a 2003 speech at the National Endowment for Democracy: "The advance of freedom is the calling of our time; it is the calling of our country. From the Fourteen Points to the Four Freedoms, to the Speech at Westminster, America has put our power

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at the service of principle. We believe that liberty is the design of nature; we believe that liberty is the direction of history. We believe that human fulfillment and excellence come in the responsible exercise of liberty. And we believe that freedom—the freedom we prize—is not for us alone, it is the right and the capacity of all mankind. . . . And as we meet the terror and violence of the world, we can be certain the Author of freedom is not indifferent to the fate of freedom." McClay reflects on the significance of Ground Zero in lower Manhattan: "It has become a shrine, a holy place, and has thereby become assimilated into the American civil religion. Yet the single most moving sight, the most powerful and immediately understandable symbol, is the famous cross-shaped girders that were pulled out of the wreckage and have been raised as a cross. What, one wonders, does this object mean to the people viewing it, many of whom, one presumes, are not Christians and not even Americans? Was it a piece of nationalist kitsch or a sentimental relic? Or was it a powerful witness to the redemptive value of suffering—and thereby, a signpost pointing toward the core of the Christian story? Or did it subordinate the Christian story to the American one, and thus traduce its Christian meaning?" There has been much public fretting about Bush's "God talk," but McClay observes that "his oratory lies well within the established historical pattern of American civil-religious discourse." The new thing is the negative reaction to such rhetoric. Bush's way of understanding America is embraced by millions of Christians who otherwise feel excluded by the secularism that dominates much of our culture. "It is far too early to say that a settled alienation of religious believers from the American nation-state is no longer a possibility," McClay writes. From Tocqueville to John Dewey, it is understood that American democracy depends upon a close connection between religion and our national creeds and institutions. Dewey, a committed secularist, even proposed a "common faith" that would embrace the emotive power of religion without its supposedly divisive truth claims. McClay writes, "It was not a bad idea. In a pluralistic society, religious believers and nonbelievers alike need ways to live together, and to do so, they need a second language of piety, one that extends their other commitments without undermining them. Yet it seems needlessly revolutionary, not to mention futile, to invent a common faith when one is readily at hand. To be sure, there is always something secondary and unsatisfying, and even inherently dangerous, about a civil religion. But the alternative may be even more perilous."

• In "The Unraveling of Christianity in America," Clifford Orwin, political scientist at the University of Toronto, writes: "Thus, mainline religion, despite its efforts to please, has become merely incidental to the lives of so many who continue to profess it. When I was growing up as a Jewish kid in Chicago in the 1950s, America still seemed very Christian. (Our Reform rabbi said it was 'Judeo-Christian.' We wanted to believe him, but the fists of the Irish kids enforced skepticism.) In retrospect, the country looked more Christian than it was. Today, by contrast, it looks less Christian than it is." Orwin takes up the Bobo (bourgeois-bohemian) image of Americans proposed by David Brooks and compares it with Alan Wolfe's book, *One Nation, After All*—which he rightly says would have been more accurately titled *One Suburban Upper Middle Class, After All*. For Brooks and Wolfe, "moral laxity is a way of life, having mysteriously emerged as the fundamental principle of morality itself." Differing from McClay, Orwin writes that, in his eagerness to avoid any hint of crusading, "Bush has embraced willy-nilly the view that liberal democracy is one thing, Protestant Christianity (or Christianity of any sort, or even Judeo-Christianity) entirely another. He has chosen to present America to the world not as the Christian nation for which his religious supporters take it, but as the universal sponsor of liberal democracy, which as such is impartial in principle as between Christianity and Islam." As a result, writes Orwin, "His administration must become America's first genuinely Methodist Taoist Native American Quaker Russian Orthodox Buddhist Jewish (and Muslim) one. And so the challenge of Islamic terror will collaborate with other forces to drive official America to ever greater lengths of secularism or syncretism."

• Muslims in America, suggests Hillel Fradkin of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, are eager to be Americans. "With the exception of African-American Muslims, America's Muslim households are relatively prosperous: More than half have incomes in excess of fifty thousand dollars a year, and the average overall is about fifty-five thousand dollars. This undoubtedly reflects the fact that nearly half of all Muslim Americans earn their living in professions such as engineering, medicine, teaching, and business management. It also reflects the fact that Muslim Americans well exceed national educational averages, with nearly 60 percent holding college degrees." After September 11, "the nature of Islam in America has become increasingly defined by the global role of America in Islam. American Muslims are now, more than ever, forced to engage in the worldwide struggle

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

over the current reformation within their religion." "A civil war is raging within the soul of Islam pitting radicals, along with their terrorist offspring, against moderate Muslims who wish to embrace modern democratic, social, and economic principles. The subjects of this dispute are encapsulated by America. In effect, then, America has become a party to that religious war."

• Bush's faith-based initiative is taken up by Stanley Carlson-Thies of the Washington-based Center for Public Justice. He writes, "In their 1977 book *To Empower People*, Peter Berger and Richard John Neuhaus argued against expansive government, recommending that officials instead should protect and foster the institutions of civil society, even utilizing those institutions in carrying out its own responsibilities. But they also raised red flags that the government might co-opt churches, families, and nonprofit structures 'in a too eager embrace that would destroy the very distinctiveness of their function.' Looking back in 1996, Berger and Neuhaus underlined that concern, writing now of a potentially 'fatal embrace' when nongovernmental organizations collaborate with the government." The fatal embrace might be avoided, Carlson-Thies suggests, through the use of vouchers and other instruments that give people a real choice among providers of social services. But religious organizations have the primary responsibility for making sure that they are not compromised by cooperating with the government. "The success of the faith-based initiative must be gauged not only by the number of times faith-based organizations win government funds, but also by those times when, if the conditions are not right, faith-based organizations reject the support that is offered."

• John DiIulio of the University of Pennsylvania and the first director of the faith-based initiative under President Bush writes that over the years "religious mega-charities like Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services, Jewish Federations, and others have literally received tens of billions of dollars in public support." He obviously agrees that smaller organizations that are closer to the communities in need should be helped in helping others. But there are big problems in achieving that, especially when those organizations are not only "faith-based" but are "faith-saturated." DiIulio writes: "Some conservatives want this accomplished by having all or most government social-welfare programs administered, not via direct grants, but through indirect disbursement arrangements, chiefly by vouchers supplied to eligible individuals. There is, in principle, nothing wrong with vouchers, and for some civic purposes (for example, drug treatment and child care), vouchers have been used to varying degrees with no obvious ill effects. Indeed, there is growing evidence that school vouchers are associated with measurable gains, including among low-income urban children and youth, and the Supreme Court's 2002 *Zelman* decision upheld a Cleveland school program that used vouchers." DiIulio concludes that "faith-based and community initiatives will improve the prospects of the needy only by following a constitutionally correct path paved by empirical data and broad public support." In view of the convoluted and conflicted rulings of the courts on "the separation of church and state," it is hard to know what that "correct path" might be. As for public support, I expect it depends chiefly upon the perception, whether supported by empirical data or not, that people are being helped.

• A less hesitant approach is provided by Joseph Loconte of the Heritage Foundation. Telling the stories of Prison Fellowship, Teen Challenge, and other programs reflecting "the politics of conversion," Loconte writes: "The First Amendment debate over religious charities is often trivialized as a fight over mealtime prayers or a crucifix hanging on an office wall. Something much more consequential, however, is at issue. The real fight is over whether the overly scientized public sphere will accept a competing anthropology: a view of the human person as endowed with moral and spiritual capacities—and obligations. If Bush's faith-based initiative can bring significant government support to groups so decidedly religious, and if those groups can deliver real results, it could revolutionize social policy in America."

• As does McClay, Joel Schwartz of the Hudson Institute revisits Will Herberg's classic 1955 book, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*. There is, he notes, a crucial dimension of religion in America that Herberg did not anticipate. "If the civil rights movement began to push some American religious forces to the left, the rise of evangelical Protestantism signified the movement of other forces to the right. But Herberg's treatment of Protestantism emphasized the mainline denominations and had little to say about evangelicals and fundamentalists: 'Whereas the Methodists and Baptists and Disciples have become great churches, the peripheral sects of today seem to be denied such possibilities. They emerge on the fringe of Protestantism but never appear able to get much closer to the center.'" Fifty years ago, Herberg saw the affirmation of religion, even if in the potentially idolatrous form of civil religion, as the glue that held

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Americans together. Today, says Schwartz, it is increasingly evident that religion is viewed as conservative and "is now a force that divides Americans and sets them against one another." During the Civil War, Lincoln observed that the people of the North and the South, whatever their differences, "pray to the same God." Today, writes Schwartz, religion is a more polarizing, less unifying force than it was in the time of Lincoln and a hundred years later in the time of Herberg. "We no longer pray to the same God—not because many Americans are now Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus, but because a gulf has arisen between the majority of Americans who pray and the minority who do not."

• Largely forgotten today is the insistence of James Madison in his *Memorial and Remonstrance* that one's duty to the Creator "is precedent both in order of time and degree of obligation" to one's duty to civil society. Michael McConnell, a federal judge and one of our most distinguished constitutional scholars, quotes these words of Madison: "Before any man can be considered as a member of Civil Society, he must be considered as a subject of the Governor of the Universe: And if a member of Civil Society, who enters into any subordinate Association, must always do it with a reservation of his duty to the general authority; much more must every man who becomes a member of any particular Civil Society, do it with a saving of his allegiance to the Universal Sovereign." That is in sharp contrast to the argument of Rousseau—who first came up with the term "civil religion"—that civil society and religion should be one and the same thing. When Jews were emancipated in Europe, the motto was "Be a man in the streets and a Jew at home." This privatization of religious particularity, McConnell notes, is still urged by many academics, including law professors. To be a citizen is to put aside, at least in public, loyalties that are not shared by all other citizens. In other words, McConnell observes, "Don't ask, don't tell." The idea that secularism is tantamount to neutrality—as in France's current banning of religious symbols in public—is, says McConnell, "a Western illusion." Like other essayists, McConnell ends up with a reflection on Islam. "It is fanciful to imagine that the Muslim world will lose its attachment to religion, just as Jefferson was fanciful and illiberal in his desire that Americans all become Unitarians. A more realistic hope is that the jihadists can be separated from the Muslim mainstream and be reduced in influence. That will not happen if America embraces a secularism that does not differentiate between the two. *Laïcité*, as a national policy, neither seems congruent with America's constitutional tradition nor likely to bring about interreligious harmony."

• Brian Anderson of the Manhattan Institute addresses the dramatic differences between Europe and America in religious belief and practice. He writes, "As for Europe, it is possible to imagine a religious resurgence there, perhaps radiating outward from still-faithful and soon-to-be-powerful Poland. Nothing in history lasts forever. The Italian philosopher and papal advisor Rocco Buttiglione argues convincingly that European modernity, in its secular humanism, leaves men and women cut off from 'an essential dimension of their being—the Absolute—and thus confronted with the worst diminution of their being.' Such diminution is existentially unbearable for many human beings over the long haul. At the same time, however, a revival does not seem imminent. The rift between a religious America and a secular Europe is thus likely to widen in the years ahead, with unpredictable consequences for the democratic world as a whole."

• One frequently hears that the naked public square is necessary because we live in a pluralistic society. William Galston of the University of Maryland proposes a refreshingly different understanding of pluralism: "Liberal democracy must steer a principled course between theocratic claims that subject politics to a single religious orthodoxy and a civic republicanism that subordinates faith to the functional requirements of the polity. This means acknowledging that there are multiple sources of authority within a shared social space, and that the relation among them is not straightforwardly hierarchical. This political pluralism may be messy and conflictive. It may even lead to confrontations not conducive to maximizing public unity and order. Avoiding anarchy is unquestionably in the public interest. But the evidence linking accommodation of conscience to the bogey of political dissolution is scanty. And if political pluralism reflects the complex truth of the human condition, then the practice of politics must do its best to honor the principles that limit the scope of politics."

• Alan Wolfe comes in for further attention in a review by Daniel J. Mahoney of Wolfe's book *The Transformation of American Religion*. The problem with Wolfe, says Mahoney, is that he has "a meager understanding of religion" as one social variable among others that is of interest only to the degree that it affects Wolfe's version of democracy. "Wolfe's view of religion, in fact, turns out to be something of a car-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

icature. He repeatedly casts traditional religion as narrow, illiberal, and judgmental. In the worst instances, it becomes apparent that for Wolfe, the mere act of interrogating one's faith makes one a full participant in intellectual modernity. A believer who thinks—in particular, one who reasons about the nature of faith—is simply no longer a practitioner of 'old time religion,' by Wolfe's lights. Such a claim would surely astonish readers of Maimonides or Aquinas." Wolfe's greatest compliment to "transformed" religion in America is that it has abandoned any authoritative truths by which the social order can be judged, and is therefore safe for democracy. Mahoney writes, "If his sociology's ultimate inspiration is the antireligious enlightenment, his inchoate theological assumptions can be traced to a fideism that denies the natural and necessary intersection of faith and reason, religious truth and natural law." Mahoney does not think Alan Wolfe is a reliable guide if one wants to understand religion in America.

• Finally we come to Joseph Bottum, who keeps his day job with the *Weekly Standard* while serving as our poetry editor. In "The Fire Next Time," he writes: "There is something in America, as well, that has always burned against the world. From Cotton Mather to William Lloyd Garrison, from John Brown to Martin Luther King, Jr., there has been a hunger here to speak with lips touched by burning coals, a blessed rage for the apocalyptic lessons taught only by tongues of fire. A nation formed by political geniuses—masters of compromise, philosophers of prudence, judges of wisdom—we are also a nation with another theme. Something here has, from the beginning, disdained political order and sought not to be brilliant, wise, and learned, but only *true*, though the heavens fall as a result. 'I am come to send fire on the earth,' Christ says in the Gospel of Luke, 'and what will I, if it be already kindled?' It's not the only thing in America, of course, but without it there is no America." Secularists understandably see religion as a social danger, and they have had a long run since the 1930s up to the present. "But," Bottum writes, "I have the sense, insofar as one can judge the tides of such things, that the secularists have lost the intellectual part of the battle and are running now only on the fumes of their irrational belief in anti-belief." The truth is, he claims, that "liberalism needs religion, but religion doesn't need liberalism." The Founders understood that, in the words of Washington's farewell address, "reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle." Bottum writes, "The United States, as it naturally wants to be—what we might call the platonic ideal of America—contains a tension we must be careful not to resolve. From its founding, the nation has always been something like a school of Enlightenment rationalists aswim in an ocean of Christian faith. And how shall the fish hate the water wherein they live? Or the water hate the fish?" And again, "'Biblical America' is the oxymoron that defines us, the contradiction that maintains us. If we lose either our extra-public religion or our Enlightenment use of public religion—if either side in this tension ever entirely vanquishes the other—the United States will cease to be much of anything at all." Bottum discusses books (by Leon Kass and Thomas Pangle) that try to mine the Bible for its contributions to our public philosophy. But the Bible is not for hire in that way, he insists: "We need the untamed Bible that forces public philosophy to bend and accommodate." And where does this leave us? Bottum answers: "Even while the mass mind's mindless cant clatters all around us, there is that which must be celebrated: the worldly wisdom of a broad and democratic spirit, the reasonable discourse of reasonable men seeking reasonable compromises. The platonic ideal of the United States must have these things; America is not America without them. But America is also not America unless, underneath it all, a small voice whispers that the nations are as a drop in a bucket and are counted as the small dust on the balance. America is a triumph of political philosophy because it is not entirely political—because it also hears, even in these days, the murmur, 'I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?'"

The special issue of the *Public Interest* on religion in America is remarkable in conception and execution. The McClay, Galston, and Bottum essays are especially valuable in underscoring the necessary tension—the tension that must not be definitively resolved one way or the other—between authentic religion and liberal democracy. Christianity has lived, and indeed flourished, with and under many different kinds of regimes. Liberal democracy, at least in its American expression, has never been without and almost certainly cannot continue without the support of Christianity. The Christian's primary community of allegiance is the Church and the Kingdom of God that the Church both proclaims and anticipates. Madison was right: one's duty to God is precedent in both time and degree of obligation. We have written in these pages that the popular American piety of "God and country" could, under the onslaught of exclusive secularism, be transformed into a forced choice of "God or country." Some of our friends,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

including some associated with the *Public Interest*, have bridled at that. For thinkers in the tradition of John Dewey, Richard Rorty, and Jeffrey Stout, to name but a few, American democracy is their religion. Put differently, they view religion instrumentally, and approve of it to the extent that it serves democracy. This is, to employ the precise biblical language, idolatry.

If, on the one hand, there are those who would exclude religion from public life or admit it only to the extent they find it useful, there are others who, in the name of "Christian America," would resolve the necessary tension by conflating God and country, to the severe detriment of both religion and democracy. This was the program, spelled out in elaborate detail, of "Reconstructionism" under the leadership of the late and eccentrically Calvinist thinker R. J. Rushdoony. While there are relatively few proponents of Reconstructionism, many conservative Christians are possessed by the Reconstructionist impulse, believing that America should be reconstituted on the basis of "Bible Law." They follow in the train, interestingly enough, of an earlier and liberal social gospel movement that aimed at "Christianizing America and Americanizing Christianity." Whether it comes from the left or the right, that ambition is fatally wrongheaded. The necessary tension will not be resolved, and we must not try to resolve it, before the End Time.

Meanwhile, our circumstance is not so different from that of St. Augustine in the fifth century. We live in two cities—or, more in today's language, two polities. The one is the polity of man, marked both by the corruptions of the lust for power and by the human aspiration toward approximate virtue. The second is the polity of God, which is the Church in obedience to the lordship of Christ. These two polities interact—sometimes conflicting, sometimes converging—in both the public square and in the hearts of believers. But Christians know which polity is precedent. Knowing that, they are pleased to serve the polity of liberal democracy that, on balance and considering the alternatives, is worthy of service and is, not without grave ambiguities, conducive to the flourishing of the Church. If, however, in the name of liberal democracy and of the necessary concerns of the secular, the polity of man succumbs to an ideological secularism at war with the polity of God, our first allegiance should not be in doubt. Such is the necessary tension that gave birth to and will, please God, sustain our constitutional order—and, with it, the vitality of religion in America. Until a better polity of man is on offer. Which may or may not happen short of the coming of the Kingdom.

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ It is thought to be a very potent plus if your favored cause has about it the air of inevitablity. Although nobody in all of human history suggested the idea until about five years ago, the major media are letting us know that they are getting more than a mite impatient with the bigots and reactionaries who are resisting the self-evident good that is same-sex marriage. In the incessant stories about devoted lesbian and gay couples with happy children assuring us that nobody needs a daddy or mommy so long as you have two of what you have or, if not two, at least a really loving adult who is between partners, there are grumbling acknowledgments that two-thirds of American adults continue, even at this late date, to obstruct the course of democratic progress. Good government, it is suggested, is too important to be left to the people, or at least to *those* people, which is why we have courts to make the laws preferred by the enlightened minority. Christopher Caldwell is senior editor at the *Weekly Standard* and a conservative of sorts who brings a critical intelligence to bear on what some view as the definitive argument for change, Jonathan Rauch's *Gay Marraige: Why It Is Good for Gays, Good for Straights, and Good for America.* But Caldwell also succumbs to the myth of inevitability, writing that most Americans view same-sex marraige as "a bad idea whose time has come." He chides Rauch for writing that "with the rise of the gay-marriage debate, another view has come to the fore: marriage is about children." Caldwell points out the obvious, that marriage has always been about having and rearing children. However: "Sex, childbearing, and childrearing—which marriage once bound as tightly as an atomic nucleus—have been disaggregated." The disaggregation has been effected by, inter alia, divorce, contraception, abortion, and cohabitation. Contra Rauch, Caldwell does not think "the gay-marriage movement will be able to shore up an institution that has for decades been undermined legally, socially, medically, theologically, philosophically, psychologically, and politically. Gays will soon accede to marriage, but only because marriage is losing its old set of purposes and is becoming, irrevocably, something else." Irrevocably as in unstoppably, so why continue to resist? Now that marriage no longer means much, why not let couples or triples or quadruples of whatever variety get married? They'll be married as much as anybody else is. Caldwell might say that his is a statement of resignation, but it is, in fact, an argument from calculatedly exaggerated catas-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trophe. The factors that he says have "disaggregated" marriage have been with us for decades, and yet "traditional" marriage, always a difficult enterprise besieged from many sides, is still standing. Ask all the couples who have recently married what they intended and I expect that, with few exceptions, they would cite the "old set of purposes"—love, companionship, fidelity, mutual support, and, yes, having and rearing children. A lot of them will fail in realizing those purposes, as a lot have always failed. The cultural indicators of the last decade, however, show that the overwhelming and growing majority of young people want to realize those purposes. It is both false and cruel to tell them that their aspirations are in vain. Far from being "a bad idea whose time has come," the deconstruction of marriage is a bad idea that some are determined to force upon the country, with the aid and support of Christopher Caldwell and others who counsel surrender to the inevitable.

■ The use of the imperative indicative is troubling in a comment on *The Passion of the Christ* by the publisher/editor of the *Christian Century*. He writes, "I concluded that you can't know much about the dreadful history of Christian anti-Semitism and feel very good about Mel Gibson's movie." I can't? I know a great deal about that history and feel very good about—or, better, think very highly of—the movie. The writer deplores the frequent reference to "the Jews" in the Fourth Gospel. "In fact, I substitute 'the people,' which, while no more accurate, at least avoids the clearly pejorative use of the term." No more accurate? He means they were neither Jews nor people? He further writes, "As I walk through the passion accounts I am also grateful for having learned to think critically." And, he might have added, humbly.

■ A study on sexuality is scheduled to come to a vote at the 2005 churchwide assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). My Lutheran friends tell me that the revisionists have been watching carefully the Episcopalian crack-up and want to avoid the alienation of a couple of million members from the much larger ELCA. So the idea is being floated that a vote would be unnecessarily "divisive," that love requires that "we live with our differences." Over time, after a few thousand same-sex blessings (which may by then be legally recognized as marriages) and a few hundred ordinations of practicing gays and lesbians (at first tolerated as "exceptions"), the Lutheran tradition will be de facto transformed from legalism to grace, and all without the inconvenient difficulties of formal deliberation, debate, and decision. The strategy might very well work. Never underestimate the power of antinomianism veiled in the language of love. When truth is trimmed to accommodate togetherness, the quality of togetherness is admittedly thinned, but the good thing is that nobody is excluded. Except, of course, those who thought the point was to be together in truth. The churchwide assembly is still a year away. It is enough time to effectively label those who want a vote for fidelity as the party of "divisiveness."

■ What would Jesus do about stem cell research? Michael Fitzgerald, who is a member of the Presbyterian Church USA, which he suggests is a good deal more enlightened than Catholics and other "conservatives," thinks he may have the answer. Writing in *Acumen*, a journal of business and science, Fitzgerald says researchers should not be distracted by legal and legislative questions. "Scientists should leave that fight to the lawyers and, instead, acknowledge something that most will find distasteful to contemplate—modern science is still playing catch-up to Jesus. Some of his miracles now seem less than awesome: Ordinary paramedics routinely bring people back to life. Artificial insemination matches virgin birth. Prozac and other drugs do a reasonable job of casting out demons." Many Christians, we are told, have qualms about creating embryos in order to use and destroy them, and progressive scientists need to meet those concerns head-on. "Scientists may doubt even the historicity of Jesus, let alone his putative divinity. But the most entrenched and effective opposition to stem cell research comes from people who buy into the New Testament hook, line, and sinker, and who may well doubt science itself. So the scientists must engage them on their own territory. In so doing, scientists may find that they've been ceding moral high ground unnecessarily." One has to wonder whether describing them as people who buy into the New Testament hook, line, and sinker is really the best way to persuade Christians who may be uneasy about Mr. Fitzgerald's suggestion that we must take over from God the process of creation. And, contra Fitzgerald, the argument that Jesus would support stem cell research because he violated the rules by healing on the Sabbath may strike some as less than conclusive. In addition to this latest specimen, *Acumen* has published some notably dumb attacks on the "sophistry" of the President's Council on Bioethics for trying to draw lines with respect to what is distinctively human. But perhaps that is to be expected in a journal of business and science that treats science as a business.

■ "The Test of Time: Challenges to Traditional Christian and Jewish Views of Homosexuality." That's the title of a seminar sponsored by the Board

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Rabbis of Southern California and the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles. Directing the seminar, it says here, are "Rabbi Steven Greenberg, the first openly gay Orthodox Rabbi, and Bishop Gene Robinson, the first openly gay Episcopal Bishop." But of course. They're just the fellows to take the lead in meeting the challenges. Assuming they are to be embraced and not repulsed, nobody knows the challenges better than the challengers. As for "the test of time," the notice says the meeting will be over by two o'clock. Brisk obsequies, it would seem, for the late and unlamented "traditional views." The notice specifies, however, that the luncheon will be kosher.

■ The *New York Times* reports that John Kerry became "combative" with reporters when asked about critics who say he does not follow Catholic teaching on questions such as abortion and same-sex unions. "Who are they?" he demanded. "Name them. Are they the same legislators who vote for the death penalty, which is in contravention of Catholic teaching?" He went on to explain: "I'm not a church spokesman. I'm a legislator running for president. My oath is to uphold the Constitution of the United States in my public life. My oath privately between me and God was defined in the Catholic Church by Pius XXIII and Pope Paul VI in the Vatican II, which allows for freedom of conscience for Catholics with respect to these choices, and that is exactly where I am." We had better tread lightly here. We're dealing with the inner sanctum of the conscience. This is a man who apparently has taken a private oath under the tutelage of a pope of whom most of us have never heard. Rumor has it that members of the very secretive Society of Pius XXIII are taught to be so careful about not imposing their religion that, just to be safe, they do not impose it upon themselves. It has also been said that "Pius XXIII" is a pseudonym used by Father Robert Drinan, a Jesuit who has contrived a moral rationale widely employed by Catholic politicians inconvenienced by Catholic teaching. I have no idea whether such rumors are true, but I have a strong hunch that during the course of this campaign we may be learning a great deal about Catholicism that nobody knew before.

■ Plaintive is the word to describe reactions among many United Methodists to the acquittal of the Rev. Karen Dammann. The charge was that she had engaged in "practices declared by the United Methodist Church (UMC) to be incompatible with Christian teachings." The pertinent teachings have been debated time and again at General Conferences of the UMC, and a strong majority backs the statement of the *Book of Discipline* on standards for ordained ministry: "Since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in the United Methodist Church." The Pacific Northwest Conference to which the Rev. Dammann belongs declared in 2000 its defiance of the UMC teaching, and in its trial of Dammann put the *Book of Discipline*, not Karen Dammann, in the dock. She was utterly straightforward about her living in a "covenanted" lesbian relationship, having presided at a same-sex "marriage" ceremony, and her involvement in related floutings of church authority. Everybody understood that the trial was something of a farce. The minister in charge of the prosecution said afterwards, "I'm glad I lost." Acknowledging that the jury ignored UMC teaching, he said, "I don't feel bad about that." I write before the UMC's General Conference in Pittsburgh. It is expected that some will press for a censure of the Pacific Northwest Conference, and perhaps of the entire Western Jurisdiction of which it is part. That may happen, or it may be, as others urge, that the deviant jurisdictions will be declared in a state of schism from the UMC. What would be the practical effect of such actions, however, is far from clear. In the past, the proponents of the biblical and traditional ethic geared up for battle royals at the General Conference, and prevailed. Much as folks in the Presbyterian Church USA and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are gearing up for a battle royal in their governing assemblies, and may prevail in their defense of the tradition. But such victories may turn out to be hollow, as willful opponents do as they wish, daring denominational authorities to act against them. Once again, the circumstance of orthodoxy being optional moves toward orthodoxy being proscribed. The orthodox declare their determination to take back their church, for which they are accused of destroying their church. Not in two millennia of Christian teaching, not in millennia more of human experience, has it been proposed that homogenital sexual relations are on a moral par with the union of man and woman. Until a few years ago. Now those who oppose or even voice serious reservations about that radical proposal are, as mentioned earlier, condemned as "divisive." Denominational structures may be preserved by vested interest in pension plans and by the triumph of those who would proscribe any orthodoxy that others might prescribe. The alternative is new Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Anglican churches, which nobody can believe is Christ's intention for his body, the Church.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

■ A gimlet-eyed reader caught this editorial correction in the *New York Times*. "A report on February 15 about the wedding of Riva Golan Ritvo and Alan Bruce Slifka included an erroneous account of the bride's education, which she supplied. Ms. Ritvo, a child therapist, did not graduate from the University of Pennsylvania or receive a master's degree in occupational therapy or a Ph.D. in neuroscience from the University of Southern California. Though she attended Penn for a time, her bachelor's degree, in occupational therapy, is from U.S.C. The *Times* should have corroborated the credentials before publishing the report." Therein must lie a story. A whistle blower in her or his family? Was he deceived? Padding a résumé to get a job is, regrettably, common enough, but to get married? Jayson Blair and Walter Duranty may have slipped by, but it is reassuring to see that the newspaper of record is on the job in the case of poor Riva Golan Ritvo.

■ After decades of progressive everything, teenagers in the United Kingdom appear to want a very different society than the one their elders gave them. *Bliss*, a teen magazine, commissioned the Young People's Survey of Great Britain, interviewing thousands of teens. Eighty-six percent say they are proud to be British, 40 percent say their mother is their greatest role model, 60 percent believe in God, 66 percent think people take abortion too lightly, and 91 percent say they intend to marry one day. In the northwest, 22 percent say they have had sex and a third of them say they now regret it. On more political matters, 82 percent do not trust Prime Minister Tony Blair, 76 percent say Britain should not have gone to war with Iraq, 90 percent are for expelling "bogus asylum seekers," almost half favor bringing back the death penalty, and 70 percent oppose the rule of the European Union. Of books and films, *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings* top the list of favorites. The editor of *Bliss* comments: "Teenagers like boundaries. They make them feel safe, but over the years they have been torn down. They want to walk the streets in safety, they want their schools to be free from drug pushers, and they don't want to be rushed into sex too young. This survey is a damning indictment of the damage caused by the lax attitudes of adults inflicted on children. Young people have passionate beliefs about the society they want to live in and it's not the one they've got." Yes, I've sent these findings on to George Weigel for possible use in his revised version of "Europe's Problem – and Ours" (see FT February), but I expect he'll respond that, given its birthrate, in fifteen years or so the UK will have very few teenagers, sensible or otherwise.

■ The state's highest court upheld a California law requiring charities to provide prescription contraception coverage. In this case, it was applied to Catholic Charities, which, the court said, did not qualify for a religious exemption because it is not religious enough. Its leadership includes non-Catholics and it serves everybody, not just Catholics. Without providing any evidence of a connection, Peter Steinfels of the *New York Times* says the ruling is part of a backlash against the Bush administration's plan to meet social needs through faith-based organizations. Close watchers of California politics, however, say that liberal legislatures have for years tried one tactic after another to force charities of all kinds to provide contraception, abortion, and other "reproductive services." At the same time, a court in San Diego ruled that a longstanding arrangement whereby the Boy Scouts manage a public park is unconstitutional. The reason? The Boy Scouts are "religious" and the arrangement is therefore a forbidden establishment of religion. Both suits were strongly supported by the ACLU. They've got you coming and going. If you claim to be religious and plead an exemption under free exercise, you're not religious enough. If you claim to be non-religious, the court finds you vestigially religious enough to be excluded from a government contract. In his more melancholic mood, Francis Cardinal George has been known to opine that within ten years' time the government's cooptation of religion will result in something like China's aboveground and underground churches, albeit without the same level of persecution. That seems to me unlikely. On the other hand. . . .

■ At a recent campus lecture, a superannuated radical from olden days interrogated me sharply on how I, the radical hero of his youth, could now be so conservative. And I thought of a line from Joseph Epstein, that master—he prefers to think of himself as the only surviving practitioner—of the occasional essay: "Sooner or later, either a man grows up or he pulls his gray hair back into a pony tail."

■ Here's an invitation to a lecture at the Harvard Club. "Empty Chairs and Empty Altars: How Will the Church Be Without All the Priests and Nuns?" The lecture is sponsored by the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley and *America* magazine. I don't think I'll go. The usual phrase is full pews and empty altars, which contrasts the burgeoning Catholic population with the diminishing number of priests. In any event, the question in the lecture title would seem to have an obvious answer. If there are no people and no priests, there will be no Church. Or is it only the nuns who sit

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on chairs? Whatever. One is struck by the number of people who seem to relish the shrinking of priestly ranks. The other day I received a long letter sent to parishioners by the pastor of a large metropolitan church—also Jesuit, I'm sorry to say. It explained in excruciating detail why, given present patterns, the parish, which now has three priests, would in a decade or two likely have to share one priest with several other parishes. There was no suggestion of a possible change in present patterns, such as, to cite one obvious possibility, the encouragement of more priestly vocations. One might describe the tone of the letter as fatalistic. Except for a few upbeat references to the multiplication of lay ministries and proposals for other professionals taking over traditionally priestly tasks. It is anticipated that the one priest some years hence will play a role of teaching, sacramental presence, and general oversight. In other words, the priest would be in a position traditionally held by a bishop. Which leads one to suspect that maybe all the talk about the inevitable decline in the number of priests is not fatalistic at all. Rather, and however perversely, it reflects something hoped for. To paraphrase Huey Long, Every Priest a Bishop.

■ "Ratzinger Regrets Church Centralism." It is a story in the *Tablet* on remarks by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger to journalists. "Perhaps we could sometimes be more generous in certain matters," Ratzinger said. The story continues, "But the right balance between the central authorities and local churches had not always been found, he admitted." That's the whole of the story. Why "he admitted"? Did they assume the Cardinal thinks that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has stretched generosity to a fault in every instance and has invariably struck exactly the right balance between Rome and local churches? One imagines the Cardinal remarking in passing that of course he is not infallible and the resulting *Tablet* headline: "Ratzinger Admits He Is Not Infallible."

■ It's not easy to say something new about the end of the world, Crawford Gribben writes in *Books & Culture*. The *Left Behind* series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, which has sold zillions of books, mainly to Evangelicals, is in large part derivative (Gribben carefully does not mention plagiarism) from a British writer, Sydney Watson, who wrote rapture novels in the early twentieth century. Since Watson, others besides LaHaye and Jenkins have rewritten the basic storyline to keep it up to date with current events such as the end of the Cold War and the latest twists in the agonies of the Middle East. With specific reference to the *Left Behind* series, Gribben writes: "Equally fascinating is the manner in which the novels negotiate the end of the other Cold War, the hostile standoff between the competing branches of Western Christendom. Throughout the rapture novel tradition, Roman Catholicism has been given a negative press. Watson's heroes were 'ultra-protestants' adhering to a 'Moody and Sankey religion.' The motives of their enemy were undisguised: 'Romanism boldly declares its aim to win, or coerce Britain back into her harlot fold.' LaHaye and Jenkins certainly moderate this mood. In *Left Behind*, the pope is among the raptured, though perhaps only because he has embraced Luther's 'heresies'; but, in later novels, the rapture seems to have also involved entire Catholic congregations whose evangelical credentials are in no way signaled. Such rapprochement is tempered, however, as the novels identify the replacement pope as the Antichrist's false prophet. In the aftermath of Evangelicals and Catholics Together, the *Left Behind* novels seek to have their cake and eat it."

■ A few years ago an acquaintance had what he thought was the brilliant idea of marketing little stuffed dolls representing Jesus and Mary. I mentioned it to a friend who is a mother of some experience. She responded, "This is a really bad idea. Kids hug their dolls and sleep with their dolls. They also dunk them in the toilet bowl and in fits of anger throw them against the wall. Moreover, little girls from time immemorial have been spanking their dolls when they think they've been bad. Jesus and Mary do not deserve this." Here is a report that CPR Marketing, Inc., in Massachusetts is launching a nationwide promotion for their Jesus Beanies. "Jesus Beanies are soft and loveable nine-inch-tall cloth dolls designed to resemble the image of Jesus Christ. They're small enough to be cuddled in young arms." Bad ideas, like bad pennies. . . . One wonders if the reviewers who complain that the Jesus of *The Passion of the Christ* is not "spiritual" (read soft and cuddly) enough played with something like Jesus Beanies when they were kids. The manufacturer says, "This cuddly toy is both a comfort-bringer and a parent's tool for helping children to understand who Jesus is, at a much younger age." Jesus as toy and tool. That's not a bad summary of the anemic spirituality that too often passes as the gospel.

■ There is a large library of books and research reports demonstrating that, by any measure, the most important factor in the flourishing of children is that they live with their mother and father. Except, gay activists note, that such children typically have a deficit in homosexual experience, which most parents believe is a very good deficit to have. There is much talk about happy children in gay and lesbian homes, but researchers are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

all but unanimous in pointing out that there are no reliable studies on that since research requires a large and identifiable population and a long period of time to know the life course of such children. Just how primitive the state of the question is at present is illustrated by Abigail Garner's *Families Like Mine: Children of Gay Parents Tell It Like It Is*. Ms. Garner is also the author of what *Publisher's Weekly* calls "the children's book classic" *Heather Has Two Mommies*. Her advocacy book is a collection of anecdotes tailored to her argument. It is acknowledged that nobody knows how many children have grown up in LGBT families. "Estimates vary from one million to sixteen million." Or maybe one hundred thousand or maybe twenty-five million or maybe whatever. (Time out: The hopeless incorrectness of this magazine's readership requires that we explain that LGBT means Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgendered. And what does transgendered mean? If you have to ask, you don't want to know.) Ms. Garner and others emphasize that many children reared by gays do not turn out to be homosexual. They are "culturally queer, erotically straight." Being culturally queer is deemed a great achievement. Which, in a very old-fashioned meaning of the word, seems a bit queer.

■ "Rick Warren's popular 1995 book, *The Purpose-Driven Church*, did not merely beget his 2002 *New York Times* best-seller, *The Purpose-Driven Life*. It also led to a flurry of imitators, including *Values-Driven Leadership* (1996), *The Servant-Driven Church* (1997), *Purpose-Driven Youth Ministry* (1998), *The Prayer-Driven Church* (2000), *Vision-Driven Small Groups* (2000), *The Mission-Driven Worship* (2001), *The Generation-Driven Church* (2002), *Jesus-Driven Ministry* (2002), *The Passion-Driven Congregation* (2003), and *The Passion-Driven Sermon* (2003). That's just for starters. It doesn't include the Purpose-Driven journals, workbooks, calendars, and DayTimers." That's from the *Nicotine Theological Journal*, to which, as longtime readers know, I am mildly addicted. The editors then add this: "These book titles might signify little more than a reminder of how trendy and derivative the evangelical publishing industry has become. But what is also striking about them is how they run against another trend in evangelical publishing, that of the therapeutic warnings against the dangers of obsessive-compulsive behavior." Trendy, derivative, and capitalistically cunning. Inducing the disease that you purport to cure is a very old and very profitable trick.

■ Jason Berry and Gerald Renner address a very important question in *Vows of Silence: The Abuse of Power in the Papacy* of *John Paul II* (Free Press). That question is the role of secrecy in church leadership. The simplistic answer is that there is no legitimate place at all for secrecy, nor for confidentiality, nor for discretion. Whether it be churches or corporations or government or the personal lives of public and not-so-public figures, everything should be exposed to the sunshine laws of "transparency." The great exception, of course, is journalism. Reporters have an absolute right to hide their sources and methods because they are the good guys and are not susceptible to abusing their power. Regrettably, the authors of the present book subscribe to that simplistic answer, and the result is yet another sensationalist screed that is likely to find few readers beyond those who have an insatiable appetite for Catholic-bashing. The book carries glowing endorsements from the egregious masters of that niche market: James Carroll, author of *Constantine's Sword*; Father Richard McBrien of Notre Dame; and Robert Blair Kaiser, formerly of *Newsweek*, who has lived a long and embittered life off the invention of nefarious Vatican conspiracies. Along with the authors of the book, they are all Catholics of a sort. By choosing such company and their accustomed style of crude accusation, the authors have almost certainly guaranteed that nobody in a position to do something about the problem they want addressed will take the book seriously, or even bother reading it. The book itself is a tediously familiar rehash of the sex scandals, combined with an uncritical celebration of Father Thomas Doyle, a Dominican who early on warned the bishops about the prevalence of sex abuse and in the last two years has become a much-lionized champion and cheerleader for sundry dissident organizations and the expert witness of choice for trial lawyers extracting millions from the Church and its insurance companies. The rest of the book is a repetition, in wearying detail, of complaints against the Legionaries of Christ and its founder Father Marcial Maciel (for a discussion of the complaints and what to make of them, see FT, "Feathers of Scandal," Public Square, March 2002). Jason Berry, let it be said, rendered an important service when, in Louisiana in the 1980s, he was among the first to throw public light on the incidence of priestly sex abuse. Gerald Renner, on the other hand, has made a long and undistinguished career of beating the Catholic Church with any stick at hand. *Vows of Silence* is a distinct disappointment, but perhaps I was wrong in hoping for something better. There is no doubt that bishops and curial officials sometimes invoke secrecy "for the good of the Church" in concealing what need not and should not be concealed. That is a big factor in the current scandals. The moral lines between secrecy and deception, between discre-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion and dishonesty, must be clarified, even as we recognize that no institution can flourish without a reasoned measure of trust in its leadership. Bishops need to hold one another accountable, and to give a believable account of their stewardship to the people whom they would lead. Responsible journalism has a legitimate role in encouraging them to do that. The prosecutorial zeal of Berry and Renner in full attack mode, however, will, if it is noticed at all, only exacerbate the problem they say they want to help remedy. A bishop wouldn't give these fellows the time of day for fear of how they would find a way to turn it against him. There are amusing moments in the book. There is, for instance, the extended discussion of "Father X" and his views on the evils of secrecy in the Church. There really is a "Father X," we are assured, and he is an expert on secrecy. Who is "Father X"? Don't ask. It must remain a secret, so severe is the problem of secrecy in the Church. Then there is the reported time a group of American bishops requested the help of John Paul II with the abuse scandals. The authors quote the Pope: "'You'll get no quick fixes out of me,' he declared." I have over the years spent hours in conversation with the Pope and anyone who believes that he ever said that to anybody about anything at any time has passed the credulity test for reading *Vows of Silence*. As the *Amazon.com* website might put it: people who bought this book also bought Carroll, McBrien, and Kaiser.

■ Several readers point out what they believe to be an egregious sign of the hubris of "the religious right." In a story on the annual convention of the National Association of Evangelicals held in Colorado Springs, the *New York Times* reports: "And the convention organizers were aware of their political clout. A slogan on the back of the convention program reads: 'What Can 30 Million Evangelicals Do For America? Anything We Want.'" Hubris? Not necessarily. Note that it says for America, not with America. Shouldn't we want people to want to do all they can for America?

■ The Canadian government is appealing a court order which mandates that gays receive survivor benefits for their dead partners, retroactive to 1985. The government claims this would potentially cost hundreds of millions of dollars it cannot afford. It is also pointed out that it would be difficult to determine who was and who was not a "long term gay partner." Gay activists decry what they see as a retreat by the new prime minister Paul Martin from the support of his predecessor, Jean Chrétien, for extending all entitlements, including marriage, to gays. In the same mail is this story from Washington D.C.'s gay newspaper, the *Washington Blade*, on the departure of Lorri Jean as executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) amidst heated policy disputes. The report says, "During contract negotiations, Jean called for dropping a longstanding NGLTF policy of paying 100 percent of the health insurance premium for staff members' domestic partners, saying the benefit was prohibitively expensive."

■ Writing in *Azure* and agreeing with almost all reviewers, Robert S. Wistrich of Hebrew University in Jerusalem thinks that Daniel J. Goldhagen goes over the top in his book *A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and Its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair*. There is much that the Catholic Church still needs to do, writes Wistrich, but: "I doubt that Goldhagen's other proposals—that the Church abandon papal infallibility, embrace religious pluralism, or actually rewrite the Christian Bible—while highly desirable in themselves, are at all practicable. . . . [They] would surely mean the end of Catholicism as it has been historically understood. This would be fiercely resisted and surely defeated." As highly desirable as the end of Catholicism would be, it's just too much to hope for? Or perhaps I misunderstand Professor Wistrich, who a few years ago helped torpedo a Jewish-Catholic project studying Vatican archives pertinent to the Holocaust.

■ It's been a while since I've had occasion to remark on Peter Singer of Princeton University, the ageing bad boy of moral philosophy. But now Gerald Nora, a second-year medical student, sends me the dust jacket of the 1996 edition of Singer's *Rethinking Life and Death*. Mr. Nora is right in suspecting that the blurbs "praising" the book might have been chosen by Professor Singer's enemies. For instance, there is this from the *Washington Post*: "Far from pointing a way out of today's moral dilemmas, Singer's book is a road map for driving down the darkest of moral blind alleys. . . . Read it to remind yourself of the enormities of which putatively civilized beings are capable." Precisely. If you want a roadmap for driving down blind alleys, this is it. Then there is this from the publisher: "A profound and provocative work in the tradition of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*." Precisely again. Even more precisely, it is in the tradition of thinking that Huxley so powerfully warned us against.

■ The demographics of the abortion controversy are often overlooked. Recent months have seen a number of reports indicating that opposition to abortion is growing dramatically among young people. In a Gallup survey of youth aged thirteen to seventeen, only 19 percent say that abortion should be legal in all circumstances (the current regime of *Roe v. Wade*)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

while 72 percent say that abortion is morally wrong and should be entirely prohibited (32 percent) or permitted only in rare instances (40 percent). Undoubtedly related to these changes is the fact that pro-life couples have an average of three children while pro-choicers average only one child. Of course children do not always, to put it gently, agree with their parents on abortion or anything else, but one cannot discount parental influence. Moreover, there is the deeply poignant but seldom mentioned factor that millions of people born in the last thirty years know that they have a brother or sister, or even brothers and sisters, who were aborted. I have often tried to imagine what I would think were I one of those children missing a sibling. "Honey," Mom explains, "we just weren't ready for another baby." I know the pro-abortion people say that a child told this is filled with warm feelings that he or she was really wanted. Maybe so, but I expect there are many more who cannot erase from their minds that Mom had their brother or sister killed. Not to mention the moral and spiritual ramifications of knowing that their existence was contingent not upon an act of nature or gift of God but solely upon their parents' decision. "Thanks for not having me killed, Mom." That touches upon the spiritually weird and murky, but I expect it has a great deal to do with the growing number of young people who view abortion with horror.

■ However the Supreme Court comes down on *Elk Grove Unified School District v. Michael A. Newdow*, there is widespread agreement that the government botched its case for keeping "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. The solicitor general fell into the trap of defending the phrase as a revered historical curiosity, an expression of ceremonial deism, and something good for reinforcing patriotic sentiment. Leon Wieseltier of the *New Republic* says that this is to evacuate religious language of any intellectual content. He writes, "The argument that a reference to God is not a reference to God is a sign that American religion is forgetting its reasons." He rightly warns against the unhappy consequences "of a smug and sloppy entanglement of religion with politics, for politics and for religion. It is never long before one nation under God gives way to one God under a nation." Which, as he does not say, is an important reason for treating that entanglement, which is in important ways inevitable, in a manner not smug and sloppy but self-critical and precise. But then Mr. Wieseltier goes off the rails. "The need of so many American believers to have government endorse their belief is thoroughly abject. How strong, and how wise, is a faith that needs to see God's name wherever it looks?" Perhaps some Americans do feel a need to have their faith stamped with a seal of government approval, which is abject. I expect most Americans, however, think we should publicly acknowledge that this is a nation under God not for the sake of their faith but for the sake of the nation. Ours, they believe, is a nation under God, as in "under judgment," and we ignore or deny that truth at great peril. In sum, they agree with Mr. Wieseltier, and with Mr. Newdow for that matter, that a reference to God is a reference to God, the government's brief notwithstanding.

■ By the end of the nineteenth century, after much wrangling, Harvard had dropped *Veritas pro Christo et ecclesia* from its motto, settling for the one word, *Veritas*. This March, Columbia University redesigned its symbol, a crown with three crosses, by removing the crosses. Columbia was established 250 years ago as an Anglican college and chartered by King George II. Predictably, some conservatives lamented the change. Others, however, took comfort in the fact that the university, while no longer Christian, is still monarchist.

■ Depending on whose data you credit, in 2000 there were 5.3 to 6.1 million Jews in the United States. The low estimate is a significant decline from the 1990 figure of 5.5 million. As a percentage of the population, Jews are certainly in decline, from 3.6 percent in 1940 to 1.9 percent today. In *American Judaism: A History*, Jonathan Sarna of Brandeis University concludes his impressive narrative with an examination of the ways in which Jews today worry about a "vanishing generation." He cautions against the despondency that reigns in some circles: "'A nation dying for thousands of years,' the great Jewish philosopher Simon Rawidowicz once observed, 'means a living nation. Our incessant dying means uninterrupted living, rising, standing up, beginning anew.' His message, delivered to Jews agonizing over the loss of six million of their compatriots, applies equally well today in the face of contemporary challenges to Jewish continuity. 'If we are the last—let us be the last as our fathers and forefathers were. Let us prepare the ground for the last Jews who will come after us, and for the last Jews who will rise after that, and so on until the end of days.'"

■ Donald Barr, a distinguished educator here in New York City, died at age eighty-two a few months ago. He married Mary Margaret Ahern in April 1946. After his father's death, their son Stephen, a member

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of our editorial board, found an old Latin missal that his father had apparently given his mother while they were courting. In it was inscribed this poem:

For Mary
October 27, 1945

I cannot share the bright inn of your creed.
Although the waters tumble sickening
And icy from the skies, and bead by bead
The windows tell of your hearth, though poplars
sing
Tonelessly "Kyrie eleison"
About my own bent head. I may not stop
Among your company. And I walk on:
The skin below my eyes accounts each drop.
My love, you are companion on my path,
Though you are with the gay and reverend
And fiery shelterers. If there be wrath
Above my road and payment at the end,
There is reward as well: you safe. I too
Am of God's party, since we both love you.
Don

His father finally came into the Church, being baptized shortly before Easter of 2000. To the great joy of Mary and in answer to her daily prayers. She died in March of 2001.

■ We continue to receive requests from Readers of FIRST THINGS (ROFTERS) who would like to convene independent discussion groups in their local communities. If you are a ROFTER living in one of the cities listed below and would like to join other readers to discuss articles and issues related to our magazine, contact the following individuals. Check the last page of each issue beginning October 2003 for more ROFTER groups around the country, or see *www.firstthings.com*. Finally, if you would like to start a group in your area, please send us your contact information so we can publish it here.

Those living in Seattle's eastside area can contact:
Michael T. Peterson
148 247th Avenue SE
Sammamish, Washington 98074
e-mail: mtp1032@comcast.net
or
Pastor David Lund
Faith Lutheran Church
9041 166th Ave NE
Redmond, Washington 98052
(206) 550-0533
e-mail: pastor@faithluth.org
In Covington, Louisiana:
Rt. Rev. Chopin Cusachs
P.O. Box 1853
Covington, Louisiana 70434
(985) 796-8454
e-mail: cusachs@bellsouth.net

There is now an e-mail discussion group called ROFTERS@Yahoogroups.com; it is monitored by William W. Eberwein and is reported to be quite active. To subscribe, send a blank e-mail to ROFTERS-Subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Sam Cable announces that he has started a weblog for interested readers. You can visit it at *www.rofters.blogspot.com.* Mr. Cable can also be contacted via e-mail at *scable@mindspring.com.*

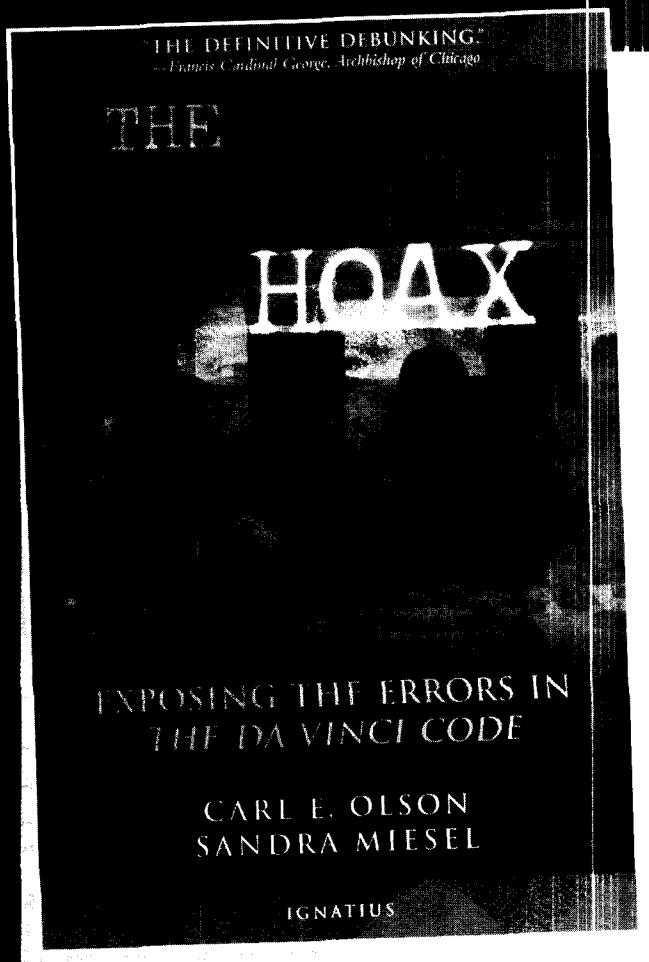
Correction: Charles Molineaux has started a ROFTER group in McLean, Virginia. His e-mail is CMlnx@aol.com, not CMInx@aol.com (the third character should be a lowercase "L," not an uppercase "i").

■ We will be happy to send a sample issue of this journal to people who you think are likely subscribers. Please send names and addresses to First Things, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, New York 10010 (or e-mail to subscriberservices@pma-inc.net). On the other hand, if they're ready to subscribe, call toll free 1-877-905-9920, or visit *www.firstthings.com.*

Sources: Caldwell on why gay marriage is so splendid, *New York Times Book Review*, April 11, 2004. *Christian Century* on how you can't feel about Gibson's movie, *Christian Century*, March 23, 2004. United Methodist Church saves Dammann's woman-to-woman marriage, *Good News* press release, March 25, 2004. U.K. teens embrace common sense rather than each other, *Manchester News*, March 11, 2004. The ACLU secular coup, *New York Times*, March 13, 2004. Epstein on "The Perpetual Adolescent," *Weekly Standard*, March 15, 2004. *Tablet*'s tabloid headline, *Tablet*, April 3, 2004. Jenkins and LaHaye leave Watson behind, *Books&Culture*, July/August 2003. Driven books, *Nicotine Theological Journal*, January 2004. Evangelicals for anything in America, *New York Times*, March 12, 2004. Canadian gays and lesbians, *Blade*, March 11, 2004. Robert S. Wistrich on Goldhagen, *Azure*, Winter 2004. Young people demonstrate pro-life attitudes, Population Research Institute, December 10, 2003. A nation under Wieseltier, *New Republic*, April 12, 2004.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"THE DEFINITIVE DEBUNKING."
— CARDINAL FRANCIS GEORGE, ARCHBISHOP OF CHICAGO



UNCOVER the

THE DA VINCI HOAX

Exposing the Errors in *The Da Vinci Code*

Carl E. Olson & Sandra Miesel

Make sure that your family and friends aren't taken in by the Da Vinci hoax. Best-selling author **Dan Brown** says that his book, ***The Da Vinci Code,*** has all the answers to Christianity and the truth about Jesus.

But **Carl Olson** and **Sandra Miesel** aren't buying it. In this exposé of sloppy research, misleading evidence, and outright fabrication in Dan Brown's book, you'll learn the REAL truth about Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Leonardo da Vinci and more.

If you, or loved ones, have questions about what's real and what's phony, turn to ***The Da Vinci Hoax.*** The next time someone asks you about *The Da Vinci Code,* make sure you have an answer.

ISBN 1-58617-034-1, 375 pp, Sewn Softcover, $15.95

Praise for *The Da Vinci Hoax:*

"*The Da Vinci Hoax* is loaded with detail and corroborates many observations I also made."
—Darrell L. Bock, Ph.D.,
Author, *Breaking the Da Vinci Code*

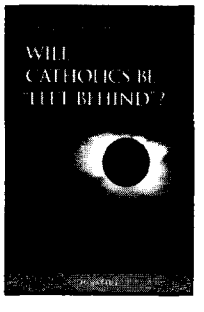
"Finally! Someone has taken the trouble to counter the absurdities of *The Da Vinci Code*. And unlike the original *Code*, *The Da Vinci Hoax* is a delight to read."
—Philip Jenkins,
Distinguished Professor of History and Religious Studies, Pennsylvania State University

"This is a fascinating read and very good medicine!"
—Michael O'Brien,
Author, *Father Elijah: An Apocalypse*

"I've painfully watched as some fall victim to *The Da Vinci Code* disease. I'll enjoy having this clearly-written antidote to prescribe."
—Marvin Olasky,
Editor-in-chief, *World* Magazine

"Olson and Miesel have done a superb and meticulous job of dissecting the fraud which is *The Da Vinci Code*."
—James Hitchcock,
Professor of History, St. Louis University

Want to learn more about *The Da Vinci Hoax?*
Go to www.davincihoax.com



ALSO FROM CARL OLSON

WILL CATHOLICS BE "LEFT BEHIND"?
A Catholic Critique of the Rapture
In respone to the best-selling *Left Behind* series, Carl Olson's powerful book is a thorough, Catholic critique of the popular Fundamentalist belief in the "Rapture".
395 pp, Sewn Softcover, $15.95

ignatius press
1-800-651-1531
P.O. BOX 1339
WWW.IGNATIUS.COM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

credere intelligas

The affinity between the life of the mind and the life of faith is embedded in Augustine's dictum, "crede ut intellegas", "believe in order that you may understand." For Augustine, truth consists in the intelligence's conforming itself to the divine sense of existence. Intelligence consists not, then, in the more or less brilliant performance of the mind, but in knowing reality as it is. To that end, faith and reason conjoined form a strong defense against the temptations of sophistry, triviality, ideology, fragmentation, skepticism, fideism, and anti-intellectualism. Faith, as the acknowledgment of the divine order of things, and reason, as the seeing of reality as it truly is, are partners in the Catholic intellectual tradition.

What can you do to contribute to the renewal of Christian culture?

The Thomas More College invites those interested in renewing Christian culture to support the College. Contact Dr. Peter V. Sampo, President and founder of the College or send contributions to The Thomas More College of Liberal Arts, Six Manchester Street, Merrimack, NH 03054. Dr. Sampo is also available to lecture on *The Renewal of Christian Culture through Catholic Higher Education*.

800-880-8308
www.thomasmorecollege.edu
MERRIMACK, NH & ROME, ITALY

The Thomas More College of Liberal Arts

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED